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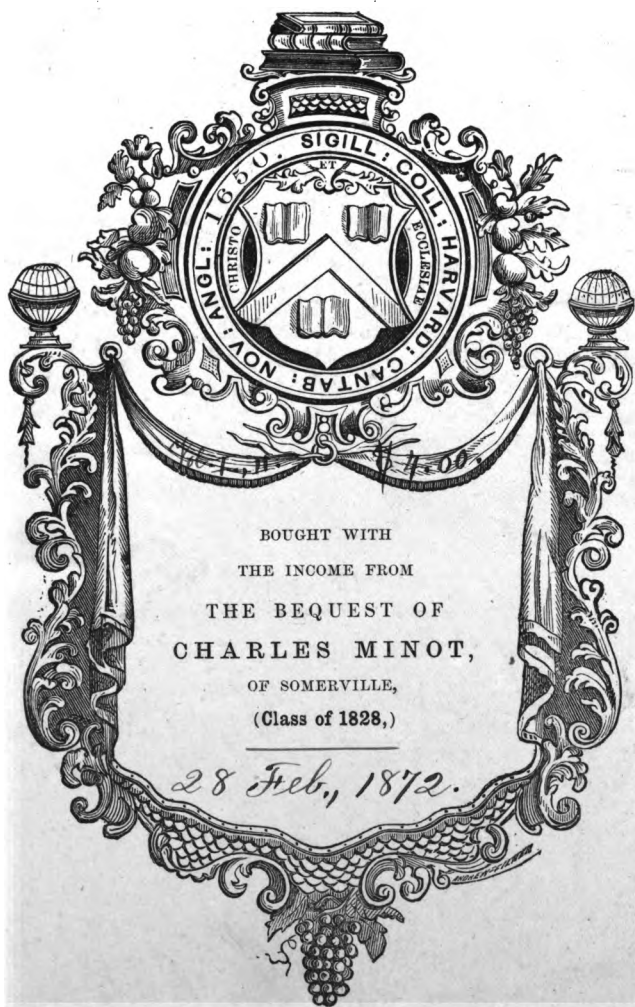
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# INTRODUCTION

TO THE

## TWELVE MINOR PROPHETS.

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N our editions of the Hebrew Bible, the book of Ezekiel is followed by the book of the Twelve Prophets (τῶν δώδεκα προφητῶν, Sir. xlix. 10; called שְׁנֵי עָשָׂר by the Rabbins; Chaldee, *e.g.* in the Masora, תְּרֵיסָר = תְּרֵי עָשָׂר), who have been called from time immemorial the smaller prophets (*q<sup>t</sup>annîm, minores*) on account of the smaller bulk of such of their prophecies as have come down to us in a written form, when contrasted with the writings of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel.<sup>1</sup> On the completion of the canon these twelve writings were put together, so as to form one prophetic book. This was done "lest one or other of them should be lost on account of its size, if they were all kept separate," as Kimchi observes in his *Præf. Comm. in Ps.*, according to a rabbinical tradition. They were also reckoned as one book, μονόβιβλος, τὸ δωδεκαπρόφητον (see my *Lehrbuch der Einleitung in d. A. T.* § 156 and 216, Anm. 10 sqq.). Their authors lived and laboured as prophets at different periods, ranging from the ninth century B.C. to the fifth; so that in these prophetic books we have not only the earliest and

<sup>1</sup> Augustine (*De civit. Dei*, xviii. 29) observes: "*Qui propterea dicuntur minores, quia sermones eorum sunt breves in eorum comparatione, qui majores ideo vocantur, quia proluxa volumina condiderunt.*" Compare with this the notice from *b. Bathra* 14*b*, in Delitzsch on Isaiah, vol. i. p. 25, translation.



latest of the prophetic testimonies concerning the future history of Israel and of the kingdom of God, but the progressive development of this testimony. When taken, therefore, in connection with the writings of the greater prophets, they comprehend all the essentials of that prophetic word, through which the Lord equipped His people for the coming times of conflict with the nations of the world, endowing them thus with the light and power of His Spirit, and causing His servants to foretell, as a warning to the ungodly, the destruction of the two sinful kingdoms, and the dispersion of the rebellious people among the heathen, and, as a consolation to believers, the deliverance and preservation of a holy seed, and the eventual triumph of His kingdom over every hostile power.

In the arrangement of the twelve, the chronological principle has so far determined the order in which they occur, that the prophets of the pre-Assyrian and Assyrian times (Hosea to Nahum) are placed first, as being the earliest; then follow those of the Chaldean period (Habakkuk and Zephaniah); and lastly, the series is closed by the three prophets after the captivity (Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi), arranged in the order in which they appeared.<sup>1</sup> Within the first of these three groups, however, the chronological order is not strictly preserved, but is outweighed by the nature of the contents. The statement made by Jerome concerning the arrangement of the twelve prophets—namely, that “the prophets, in whose books the time is not indicated in the title, prophesied under the same kings as the prophets, whose books precede theirs with the date of composition inserted” (*Præf. in 12 Proph.*)—does not rest “upon a good traditional basis,” but is a mere conjecture, and is proved to be erroneous by the fact that Malachi did not prophesy in the time of Darius Hystaspes, as his two predecessors are said to have done. And there are others also, of whom it can be shown, that the position they occupy is not chronologically correct. Joel and Obadiah did not first begin to prophesy under Uziah of Judah and Jeroboam II. of Israel, but commenced their labours before that time; and Obadiah prophesied before Joel, as is obvious from the fact that Joel (in ch. ii. 32) introduces into his announcement of salvation the words used by Obadiah in ver. 17, “and in Mount Zion shall

<sup>1</sup> Compare Delitzsch on Isaiah, vol. i. p. 25.

be deliverance," and does so with what is equivalent to a direct citation, viz. the expression "as the Lord hath said." Hosea, again, would stand after Amos, and not before him, if a strictly chronological order were observed; for although, according to the headings to their books, they both prophesied under Uzziah and Jeroboam II., Hosea continued prophesying down to the times of Hezekiah, so that in any case he prophesied for a long time after Amos, who commenced his work earlier than he. The plan adopted in arranging the earliest of the minor prophets seems rather to have been the following: Hosea was placed at the head of the collection, as being the most comprehensive, just as, in the collection of Pauline epistles, that to the Romans is put first on account of its wider scope. Then followed the prophecies which had no date given in the heading; and these were so arranged, that a prophet of the kingdom of Israel was always paired with one of the kingdom of Judah, viz. Joel with Hosea, Obadiah with Amos, Jonah with Micah, and Nahum the Galilean with Habakkuk the Levite. Other considerations also operated in individual cases. Thus Joel was paired with Hosea, on account of its greater scope; Obadiah with Amos, as being the smaller, or rather smallest book; and Joel was placed before Amos, because the latter commences his book with a quotation from Joel iii. 16, "Jehovah will roar out of Zion," etc. Another circumstance may also have led to the pairing of Obadiah with Amos, viz. that Obadiah's prophecy might be regarded as an expansion of Amos ix. 12, "that they may possess the remnant of Edom." Obadiah was followed by Jonah before Micah, not only because Jonah had lived in the reign of Jeroboam II., the contemporary of Amaziah and Uzziah, whereas Micah did not appear till the reign of Jotham, but possibly also because Obadiah begins with the words, "We have heard tidings from Judah, and a messenger is sent among the nations;" and Jonah was such a messenger (Delitzsch). In the case of the prophets of the second and third periods, the chronological order was well known to the collectors, and consequently this alone determined the arrangement. It is true that, in the headings to Nahum and Habakkuk, the date of composition is not mentioned; but it was evident from the nature of their prophecies, that Nahum, who predicted the destruction of Nineveh, the capital of the

Assyrian empire, must have lived, or at any rate have laboured, before Habakkuk, who prophesied concerning the Chaldean invasion. And lastly, when we come to the prophets after the captivity, in the case of Haggai and Zechariah, the date of their appearance is indicated not only by the year, but by the month as well; and with regard to Malachi, the collectors knew well that he was the latest of all the prophets, from the fact that the collection was completed, if not in his lifetime and with his co-operation, at all events very shortly after his death.

The following is the correct chronological order, so far as it can be gathered with tolerable certainty from the contents of the different writings, and the relation in which they stand to one another, even in the case of those prophets the headings to whose books do not indicate the date of composition :

1. Obadiah : in the reign of Joram king of Judah,  
between . . . . . 889 and 884 B.C.
2. Joel : in the reign of Joash king of Judah,  
between . . . . . 875 and 848 B.C.
3. Jonah : in the reign of Jeroboam II. of Israel,  
between . . . . . 824 and 783 B.C.
4. Amos : in the reign of Jeroboam II. of Israel and  
Uzziah of Judah, between . . . . . 810 and 783 B.C.
5. Hosea : in the reign of Jeroboam II. of Israel, and  
from Uzziah to Hezekiah of Judah, between 790 and 725 B.C.
6. Micah : in the reign of Jotham, Ahaz, and Heze-  
kiah of Judah, between . . . . . 758 and 710 B.C.
7. Nahum : in the second half of the reign of  
Hezekiah, between . . . . . 710 and 699 B.C.
8. Habakkuk : in the reign of Manasseh or Josiah,  
between . . . . . 650 and 628 B.C.
9. Zephaniah : in the reign of Josiah, between 628 and 623 B.C.
10. Haggai : in the second year of Darius Hystaspes,  
viz. . . . . 519 B.C.
11. Zechariah : in the reign of Darius Hystaspes,  
from . . . . . 519 B.C.
12. Malachi : in the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus,  
between . . . . . 433 and 424 B.C.

Consequently the literature of the prophetic writings does not date, first of all, from the time when Assyria rose into an imperial power, and assumed a threatening aspect towards Israel, *i.e.* under Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel, and Uzziah king of Judah, or about 800 B.C., as is commonly

supposed, but about ninety years earlier, under the two Jorams of Judah and Israel, while Elisha was still living in the kingdom of the ten tribes. But even in that case the growth of the prophetic literature is intimately connected with the development of the theocracy. The reign of Joram the son of Jehoshaphat was one of eventful importance to the kingdom of Judah, which formed the stem and kernel of the Old Testament kingdom of God from the time that the ten tribes fell away from the house of David, and possessed in the temple of Jerusalem, which the Lord Himself had sanctified as the dwelling-place of His name, and also in the royal house of David, to which He had promised an everlasting existence, positive pledges not only of its own preservation, but also of the fulfilment of the divine promises which had been made to Israel. Joram had taken as his wife Athaliah, a daughter of Ahab and of Jezebel the fanatical worshipper of Baal; and through this marriage he transplanted into Judah the godlessness and profligacy of the dynasty of Ahab. He walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, as the house of Ahab did. He slew his brethren with the sword, and drew away Jerusalem and Judah to idolatry (2 Kings viii. 18, 19; 2 Chron. xxi. 4-7, 11). After his death, and that of his son Ahaziah, his wife Athaliah seized upon the government, and destroyed all the royal seed, with the exception of Joash, a child of one year old, who was concealed in the bed-chambers by the sister of Ahaziah, who was married to Jehoiada the high priest, and so escaped. Thus the divinely chosen royal house was in great danger of being exterminated, had not the Lord preserved to it an offshoot, for the sake of the promise given to His servant David (2 Kings xi. 1-3; 2 Chron. xxii. 10-12). Their sins were followed by immediate punishment. In the reign of Joram, not only did Edom revolt from Judah, and that with such success, that it could never be brought into subjection again, but Jehovah also stirred up the spirit of the Philistines and Petræan Arabians, so that they forced their way into Jerusalem, and carried off the treasures of the palace, as well as the wives and sons of the king, with the exception of Ahaziah, the youngest son (2 Kings viii. 20-22; 2 Chron. xxi. 8-10, 16, 17). Joram himself was very soon afflicted with a painful and revolting disease (2 Chron. xxi.

18, 19); his son Ahaziah was slain by Jehu, after a reign of rather less than a year, together with his brethren (relations) and some of the rulers of Judah; and his wife Athaliah was dethroned and slain after a reign of six years (2 Kings ix. 27-29, xi. 13 sqq.; 2 Chron. xxii. 8, 9, xxiii. 12 sqq.). With the extermination of the house of Ahab in Israel, and its offshoots in Judah, the open worship of Baal was suppressed in both kingdoms; and thus the onward course of the increasing religious and moral corruption was arrested. But the evil was not radically cured. Even Jehoiada, who had been rescued by the high priest and set upon the throne, yielded to the entreaties of the rulers in Judah, after the death of his deliverer, tutor, and mentor, and not only restored idolatry in Jerusalem, but allowed them to stone to death the prophet Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, who condemned this apostasy from the Lord (2 Chron. xxiv. 17-22). Amaziah, his son and successor, having defeated the Edomites in the Salt valley, brought the gods of that nation to Jerusalem, and set them up to be worshipped (2 Chron. xxv. 14). Conspiracies were organized against both these kings, so that they both fell by the hands of assassins (2 Kings xii. 21, xiv. 19; 2 Chron. xxiv. 25, 26, xxv. 27). The next two kings of Judah, viz. Uzziah and Jotham, did indeed abstain from such gross idolatry and sustain the temple worship of Jehovah at Jerusalem; and they also succeeded in raising the kingdom to a position of great earthly power, through the organization of a powerful army, and the erection of fortifications in Jerusalem and Judah. But the internal apostasy of the people from the Lord and His law increased even in their reigns, so that under Ahaz the torrent of corruption broke through every dam; idolatry prevailed throughout the entire kingdom, even making its way into the courts of the temple; and wickedness reached a height unknown before (2 Kings xvi.; 2 Chron. xxviii.). Whilst, therefore, on the one hand, the godless reign of Joram laid the foundation for the internal decay of the kingdom of Judah, and his own sins and those of his wife Athaliah were omens of the religious and moral dissolution of the nation, which was arrested for a time, however, by the grace and faithfulness of the covenant God, but which burst forth in the time of Ahaz with terrible force, bringing the kingdom even then to the

verge of destruction, and eventually reached the fullest height under Manasseh, so that the Lord could no longer refrain from pronouncing upon the people of His possession the judgment of rejection (2 Kings xxi. 10-16); on the other hand, the punishment inflicted upon Judah for Joram's sins, in the revolt of the Edomites, and the plundering of Jerusalem by Philistines and Arabians, were preludes of the rising up of the world of nations above and against the kingdom of God, in order, if possible, to destroy it. We may see clearly of what eventful importance the revolt of Edom was to the kingdom of Judah, from the remark made by the sacred historian, that Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah "unto this day" (2 Kings viii. 22; 2 Chron. xxi. 10), *i.e.* until the dissolution of the kingdom of Judah, for the victories of Amaziah and Uzziah over the Edomites did not lead to their subjugation; and still more clearly from the description contained in Obad. 10-14, of the hostile acts of the Edomites towards Judah on the occasion of the taking of Jerusalem by the Philistines and Arabians; from which it is evident, that they were not satisfied with having thrown off the hateful yoke of Judah, but proceeded, in their malignant pride, to attempt the destruction of the people of God.

In the kingdom of the ten tribes also, Jehu had rooted out the worship of Baal, but had not departed from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. Therefore even in his reign the Lord "began to cut off from Israel;" and Hazael the Syrian smote it in all its coasts. At the prayer of Jehoahaz, his son and successor, God had compassion once more upon the tribes of this kingdom, and sent them deliverers in the two kings Joash and Jeroboam II., so that they escaped from the hands of the Syrians, and Jeroboam was able to restore the ancient boundaries of the kingdom (2 Kings x. 28-33, xiii. 3-5, 23-25, xiv. 25). Nevertheless, as this fresh display of grace did not bear the fruits of repentance and return to the Lord, the judgments of God burst upon the sinful kingdom after the death of Jeroboam, and hurried it on to destruction.

In this eventful significance of the reign of Joram king of Judah, who was related to the house of Ahab and walked in his ways, with reference to the Israelitish kingdom of God, we may doubtless discover the foundation for the change which

occurred from that time forward in the development of prophecy:—namely, that the Lord now began to raise up prophets in the midst of His people, who discerned in the present the germs of the future, and by setting forth in this light the events of their own time, impressed them upon the hearts of their countrymen both in writing and by word of mouth. The difference between the *prophetæ priores*, whose sayings and doings are recorded in the historical books, and the *prophetæ posteriores*, who composed prophetic writings of their own, consisted, therefore, not so much in the fact that the former were prophets of “irresistible actions,” and the latter prophets of “convincing words” (Delitzsch), as in the fact that the earlier prophets maintained the right of the Lord before the people and their civil rulers both by word and deed, and thereby exerted an immediate influence upon the development of the kingdom of God in their own time; whereas the later prophets seized upon the circumstances and relations of their own times in the light of the divine plan of salvation as a whole, and whilst proclaiming both the judgments of God, whether nearer or more remote, and the future salvation, predicted the onward progress of the kingdom of God in conflict with the powers of the world, and through these predictions prepared the way for the revelation of the glory of the Lord in His kingdom, or the coming of the Saviour to establish a kingdom of righteousness and peace. This distinction has also been recognised by G. F. Oehler, who discovers the reason for the composition of separate prophetic books in the fact, that “prophecy now acquired an importance which extended far beyond the times then present; inasmuch as the consciousness was awakened in the prophets’ minds with regard to both kingdoms, that the divine counsels of salvation could not come to fulfilment in the existing generation, but that the present form of the theocracy must be broken to pieces, in order that, after a thorough judicial sifting, there might arise out of the rescued and purified remnant the future church of salvation;” and who gives this explanation of the reason for committing the words of the prophets to writing, that “it was in order that, when fulfilled, they might prove to future generations the righteousness and faithfulness of the covenant God, and that they might serve until then as a lamp to the righteous, enabling them, even in the midst of the darkness

of the coming times of judgment, to understand the ways of God in His kingdom." All the prophetic books subserve this purpose, however great may be the diversity in the prophetic word which they contain,—a diversity occasioned by the individuality of the authors and the special circumstances among which they lived and laboured.


For the exegetical writings on the Minor Prophets, see my *Lehrbuch der Einleitung*, p. 273 sqq.





# HOSEA.

## INTRODUCTION.

1.  HE PERSON OF THE PROPHET.—*Hosea*, הוֹשֵׁעַ, i.e. help, deliverance, or regarding it as *abstractum pro concreto*, helper, salvator, 'Oshé (LXX.) or 'Oshé (Rom. ix. 20), Osee (Vulg.), the son of a certain Beëri, prophesied, according to the heading to his book (ch. i. 1), in the reigns of the kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah of Judah, and in that of king Jeroboam, son of Joash, of Israel; and, as the nature of his prophecies clearly proves, he prophesied not only concerning, but in, the kingdom of the ten tribes, so that we must regard him as a subject of that kingdom. This is favoured not only by the fact that his prophetic addresses are occupied throughout with the kingdom of the ten tribes, but also by the peculiar style and language of his prophecies, which have here and there an Aramæan colouring (for example, such forms as אֲמַחֲמִיד, ch. iv. 6; חַיִּי (inf.), ch. vi. 9; קִימֹשׁ for קִימֹשׁ, ch. ix. 6; קָאם for קָם, ch. x. 14; תִּרְנֹנִיתִי, ch. xi. 3; אֹכֵלִי for אֲכָלִי, ch. xi. 4; תִּלְוָא, in ch. xi. 7; יִפְרִיא for יִפְרָה, ch. xiii. 15; and such words as רָחַת, ch. xiii. 1; אֵהִי for אֵיָה, ch. xiii. 10, 14), and still more by the intimate acquaintance with the circumstances and localities of the northern kingdom apparent in such passages as ch. v. 1, vi. 8, 9, xii. 12, xiv. 6 sqq., which even goes so far that he calls the Israelitish kingdom "the land" in ch. i. 2, and afterwards speaks of the king of Israel as "our king" (ch. vii. 5). On the other hand, neither the fact that he mentions the kings of Judah in the heading, to indicate the period of his prophetic labours (ch. i. 1), nor the repeated allusions to Judah in passing (ch. i. 7, ii. 2, iv. 15, v. 5, 10, 12–14, vi. 4, 11, viii. 14, x. 11, xii. 1, 3), furnish any proof that he was a Judæan by birth, as Jahn and Maurer suppose. The allusion to the kings of Judah (ch. i. 1), and

that before king Jeroboam of Israel, may be accounted for not from any outward relation to the kingdom of Judah, but from the inward attitude which Hosea assumed towards that kingdom in common with all true prophets. As the separation of the ten tribes from the house of David was in its deepest ground apostasy from Jehovah (see the commentary on 1 Kings xii.), the prophets only recognised the legitimate rulers of the kingdom of Judah as true kings of the people of God, whose throne had the promise of permanent endurance, even though they continued to render civil obedience to the kings of the kingdom of Israel, until God Himself once more broke up the government, which he had given to the ten tribes in His anger to chastise the seed of David which had fallen away from Him (Hos. xiii. 11). It is from this point of view that Hosea, in the heading to his book, fixes the date of his ministry according to the reigns of the kings of Judah, of whom he gives a complete list, and whom he also places first; whereas he only mentions the name of one king of Israel, viz. the king in whose reign he commenced his prophetic course, and that not merely for the purpose of indicating the commencement of his career with greater precision, as Calvin and Hengstenberg suppose, but still more because of the importance attaching to Jeroboam II. in relation to the kingdom of the ten tribes.

Before we can arrive at a correct interpretation of the prophecies of Hosea, it is necessary, as ch. i. and ii. clearly show, that we should determine with precision the time when he appeared, inasmuch as he not only predicted the overthrow of the house of Jehu, but the destruction of the kingdom of Israel as well. The reference to Uzziah is not sufficient for this; for during the fifty-two years' reign of this king of Judah, the state of things in the kingdom of the ten tribes was immensely altered. When Uzziah ascended the throne, the Lord had looked in mercy upon the misery of the ten tribes of Israel, and had sent them such help through Jeroboam, that, after gaining certain victories over the Syrians, he was able completely to break down their supremacy over Israel, and to restore the ancient boundaries of the kingdom (2 Kings xiv. 25-27). But this elevation of Israel to new power did not last long. In the thirty-seventh year of Uzziah's reign, Zechariah, the son and successor of Jeroboam, was murdered by Shallum after a

reign of only six months, and with him the house of Jehu was overthrown. From this time forward, yea, even from the death of Jeroboam in the twenty-seventh year of Uzziah's reign, the kingdom advanced with rapid strides towards utter ruin. Now, if Hosea had simply indicated the time of his own labours by the reigns of the kings of Judah, since his ministry lasted till the time of Hezekiah, we might easily be led to assign its commencement to the closing years of Uzziah's reign, in which the decline of the kingdom of Israel had already begun to show itself and its ruin could be foreseen to be the probable issue. If, therefore, it was to be made apparent that the Lord does reveal future events to His servants even "before they spring forth" (Isa. xlii. 9), this could only be done by indicating with great precision the time of Hosea's appearance as a prophet, *i.e.* by naming king Jeroboam. Jeroboam reigned contemporaneously with Uzziah for twenty-six years, and died in the twenty-seventh year of the reign of the latter, who outlived him about twenty-five years, and did not die till the second year of Pekah (see at 2 Kings xv. 1, 32). It is evident from this that Hosea commenced his prophetic labours within the twenty-six years of the contemporaneous reigns of Uzziah and Jeroboam, that is to say, before the twenty-seventh year of the former, and continued to labour till a very short time before the destruction of the kingdom of the ten tribes, since he prophesied till the time of Hezekiah, in the sixth year of whose reign Samaria was conquered by Shalmanezzer, and the kingdom of Israel destroyed. The fact that of all the kings of Israel Jeroboam only is mentioned, may be explained from the fact that the house of Jehu, to which he belonged, had been called to the throne by the prophet Elisha at the command of God, for the purpose of rooting out the worship of Baal from Israel, in return for which Jehu received the promise that his sons should sit upon the throne to the fourth generation (2 Kings x. 30); and Jeroboam, the great-grandson of Jehu, was the last king through whom the Lord sent any help to the ten tribes (2 Kings xiv. 27). In his reign the kingdom of the ten tribes reached its greatest glory. After his death a long-continued anarchy prevailed, and his son Zechariah was only able to keep possession of the throne for half a year. The kings who followed fell, one after another,

by conspiracies, so that the uninterrupted and regular succession to the throne ceased with the death of Jeroboam; and of the six rulers who came to the throne after his death, not one was called by God through the intervention of a prophet, and only two were able to keep possession of it for any length of time, viz. Menahem for ten years, and Pekah for twenty.

Again, the circumstance that Hosea refers repeatedly to Judah in his prophecies, by no means warrants the conclusion that he was a citizen of the kingdom of Judah. The opinion expressed by Maurer, that an Israelitish prophet would not have troubled himself about the Judæans, or would have condemned their sins less harshly, is founded upon the unscriptural assumption, that the prophets suffered themselves to be influenced in their prophecies by subjective sympathies and antipathies as mere *morum magistri*, whereas they simply proclaimed the truth as organs of the Spirit of God, without any regard to man at all. If Hosea had been sent out of Judah into the kingdom of Israel, like the prophet in 1 Kings xiii., or the prophet Amos, this would certainly have been mentioned, at all events in the heading, just as in the case of Amos the native land of the prophet is given. But cases of this kind formed very rare exceptions to the general rule, since the prophets in Israel were still more numerous than in the kingdom of Judah. In the reign of Jeroboam the prophet Jonah was living and labouring there (2 Kings xiv. 25); and the death of the prophet Elisha, who had trained a great company of young men for the service of the Lord in the schools of the prophets at Gilgal, Bethel, and Jericho, had only occurred a few years before. The fact that a prophet who was born in the kingdom of the ten tribes, and laboured there, alluded in his prophecies to the kingdom of Judah, may be accounted for very simply, from the importance which this kingdom possessed in relation to Israel as a whole, both on account of the promises it had received, and also in connection with its historical development. Whilst the promises in the possession of the Davidic government of the kingdom of Judah formed a firm ground of hope for godly men in all Israel, that the Lord could not utterly and for ever cast off His people; the announcement of the judgments, which would burst upon Judah also on account of its apostasy, was intended to warn the ungodly against false

trust in the gracious promises of God, and to proclaim the severity and earnestness of the judgment of God. This also explains the fact that whilst, on the one hand, Hosea makes the salvation of the ten tribes dependent upon their return to Jehovah their God and David their king (ch. i. 7, ii. 2), and warns Judah against sinning with Israel (ch. iv. 15), on the other hand, he announces to Judah also that it is plunging headlong into the very same ruin as Israel, in consequence of its sins (ch. v. 5, 10 sqq., vi. 4, 11, etc.); whereas the conclusions drawn by Ewald from these passages—namely, that at first Hosea only looked at Judah from the distance, and that it was not till a later period that he became personally acquainted with it, and not till after he had laboured for a long time in the northern part of the kingdom that he came to Judah and composed his book—are not only at variance with the fact, that as early as ch. ii. 2 the prophet proclaims indirectly the expulsion of Judah from its own land into captivity, but are founded upon the false notion, that the prophets regarded their own subjective perceptions and individual judgments as inspirations from God.

According to the heading, Hosea held his prophetic office for about sixty or sixty-five years (viz. 27–30 years under Uzziah, 31 under Jotham and Ahaz, and 1–3 years under Hezekiah). This also agrees with the contents of his book. In ch. i. 4, the overthrow of the house of Jehu, which occurred about eleven or twelve years after the death of Jeroboam, in the thirty-ninth year of Uzziah (2 Kings xv. 10, 13), is foretold as being near at hand; and in ch. x. 14, according to the most probable explanation of this passage, the expedition of Shalmanezar into Galilee, which occurred, according to 2 Kings xvii. 3, at the commencement of the reign of Hoshea, the last of the Israelitish kings, is mentioned as having already taken place, whilst a fresh invasion of the Assyrians is threatened, which cannot be any other than the expedition of Shalmanezar against king Hoshea, who had revolted from him, which ended in the capture of Samaria after a three years' siege, and the destruction of the kingdom of the ten tribes in the sixth year of Hezekiah. The reproof in ch. vii. 11, "They call to Egypt, they go to Assyria," and that in ch. xii. 1, "They do make a covenant with the Assyrians, and oil is carried into Egypt," point

to the same period; for they clearly refer to the time of Hoshea, who, notwithstanding the covenant that he had made with Asshur, *i.e.* notwithstanding the oath of fidelity rendered to Shalmanezzer, purchased the assistance of the king of Egypt by means of presents, that he might be able to shake off the Assyrian yoke. The history knows nothing of any earlier alliances between Israel and Egypt; and the supposition that, in these reproaches, the prophet has in his mind simply two political parties, *viz.* an Assyrian and an Egyptian, is hardly reconcilable with the words themselves; nor can it be sustained by an appeal to Isa. vii. 17 sqq., or even to Zech. x. 9-11, at least so far as the times of Menahem are concerned. Nor is it any more possible to infer from ch. vi. 8 and xii. 11, that the active ministry of the prophet did not extend beyond the reign of Jotham, on the ground that, according to these passages, Gilead and Galilee, which were conquered and depopulated by Tiglath-pileser, whom Ahaz called to his help (2 Kings xv. 29), were still in the possession of Israel (Simson). For it is by no means certain that ch. xii. 11 presupposes the possession of Galilee, but the words contained in this verse might have been uttered even after the Assyrians had conquered the land to the east of the Jordan; and in that case, the book, which comprises the sum and substance of all that Hosea prophesied during a long period, must of necessity contain historical allusions to events that were already things of the past at the time when his book was prepared (Hengstenberg). On the other hand, the whole of the attitude assumed by Assyria towards Israel, according to ch. v. 13, x. 6, xi. 5, points beyond the times of Menahem and Jotham, even to the Assyrian oppression, which first began with Tiglath-pileser in the time of Ahaz. Consequently there is no ground whatever for shortening the period of our prophet's active labours. A prophetic career of sixty years is not without parallel. Even Elisha prophesied for at least fifty years (see at 2 Kings xiii. 20, 21). This simply proves, according to the apt remark of Calvin, "how great and indomitable were the fortitude and constancy with which he was endowed by the Holy Spirit." Nothing certain is known concerning the life of the prophet;<sup>1</sup> but his inner life lies before

<sup>1</sup> The traditional accounts are very meagre, and altogether unsupported. According to *Pseudepiphanius*, *De vitis prophet.* c. xi., *Pseudo-Doroth.* *De*

us in his writings, and from these we may clearly see that he had to sustain severe inward conflicts. For even if such passages as ch. iv. 4, 5, and ix. 7, 8, contain no certain indications of the fact, that he had to contend against the most violent hostilities as well as secret plots, as Ewald supposes, the sight of the sins and abominations of his countrymen, which he had to denounce and punish, and the outburst of the divine judgments upon the kingdom thus incessantly ripening for destruction, which he had to experience, could not fail to fill his soul, burning as it was for the deliverance of his people, with the deepest anguish, and to involve him in all kinds of conflicts.

**2. TIMES OF THE PROPHET.**—When Hosea was called to be a prophet, the kingdom of the ten tribes of Israel had been elevated to a position of great earthly power by Jeroboam II. Even under Joash the Lord had had compassion upon the children of Israel, and had turned to them again for the sake of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; so that Joash had been able to recover the cities, which Hazael of Syria had conquered in the reign of his father Jehoahaz, from Benhadad the son of Hazael, and to restore them to Israel (2 Kings xiii. 23–25). The Lord sent still further help through Jeroboam the son of Joash. Because He had not yet spoken to root out the name of Israel under heaven, He gave them victory in war, so that they were able to conquer Damascus and Hamath again, so far as they had belonged to Judah under David and Solomon, and to restore the ancient boundaries of Israel, from the province of Hamath to the Dead Sea, according to the word of Jehovah the God of Israel, which He had spoken through His servant the prophet Jonah (2 Kings xiv. 25–28). But this revival of the might and greatness of Israel was only the last display of divine grace, through which

*prophetis*, c. i., and in a Scholion before *Ephr. Syri Explan. in Hos.*, he sprang from *Belemoth*, or *Belemôn*, or *Beelmoth*, in the tribe of Issachar, and is said to have died and been buried there. On the other hand, according to a tradition current among the inhabitants of Thessalonica, found in *שלישית*, *הקבלה*, he died in Babylon. According to an Arabian legend, it was not far from Tripolis, viz. in the city of *Almenia*; whilst the Arabs also point out a grave, which is supposed to be his, in the land to the east of the Jordan, on the site of Ramoth Gilead; cf. Simson, *der Prophet Hosea*, p. 1 sqq.



the Lord sought to bring back His people from their evil ways, and lead them to repentance. For the roots of corruption, which the kingdom of Israel had within it from its very commencement, were not exterminated either by Joash or Jeroboam. These kings did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had caused Israel to sin, any more than their predecessors (2 Kings xiii. 11, xiv. 24). Jehu, the founder of this dynasty, had indeed rooted out Baal from Israel; but he had not departed from the golden calves at Bethel and Dan, through the setting up of which Jeroboam the son of Nebat had led Israel into sin (2 Kings x. 28, 29). Nor did his successors take any more care to walk in the law of Jehovah, the God of Israel, with all their heart. Neither the severe chastisements which the Lord inflicted upon the people and the kingdom, by delivering Israel up to the power of Hazael king of Syria and his son Benhadad, in the time of Jehu and Jehoahaz, causing it to be smitten in all its borders, and beginning to cut off Israel (2 Kings x. 32, 33, xiii. 3); nor the love and grace which He manifested towards them in the reigns of Joash and Jeroboam, by liberating them from the oppression of the Syrians, and restoring the former greatness of the kingdom,—were sufficient to induce the king or the people to relinquish the worship of the calves. This sin of Jeroboam, however, although it was Jehovah who was worshipped under the symbol of the calf, was a transgression of the fundamental law of the covenant, which the Lord had made with Israel, and therefore was a formal departure from Jehovah the true God. And Jeroboam the son of Nebat was not content with simply introducing images or symbols of Jehovah, but had even banished from his kingdom the Levites, who opposed this innovation, and had taken men out of the great body of the people, who were not sons of Levi, and made them priests, and had gone so far as to change the time of celebrating the feast of tabernacles from the seventh month to the eighth (1 Kings xii. 31, 32), merely for the purpose of making the religious gulf which separated the two kingdoms as wide as possible, and moulding the religious institutions of his kingdom entirely according to his own caprice. Thus the worship of the people became a political institution, in direct opposition to the idea of the kingdom of God; and the sanctuary of Jehovah was

changed into a king's sanctuary (Amos vii. 13). But the consequences of this image-worship were even worse than these. Through the representation of the invisible and infinite God under a visible and earthly symbol, the glory of the one true God was brought down within the limits of the finite, and the God of Israel was placed on an equality with the gods of the heathen. This outward levelling was followed, with inevitable necessity, by an inward levelling also. The Jehovah worshipped under the symbol of an ox was no longer essentially different from the Baals of the heathen, by whom Israel was surrounded; but the difference was merely a formal one, consisting simply in a peculiar mode of worship, which had been prescribed in His revelation of Himself, but which could not lay the foundation of any permanently tenable party-wall. For, whilst the heathen were accustomed to extend to the national Deity of Israel the recognition which they accorded to the different Baals, as various modes of revelation of one and the same Deity; the Israelites, in their turn, were also accustomed to grant toleration to the Baals; and this speedily passed into formal worship. "Outwardly, the Jehovah-worship still continued to predominate; but inwardly, the worship of idols rose almost into exclusive supremacy. When once the boundary lines between the two religions were removed, it necessarily followed that that religion acquired the strongest spiritual force, which was most in accordance with the spirit of the nation. And from the very corruptions of human nature this was not the strict Jehovah religion, which being given by God did not bring down God to the low level of man, but sought to raise man up to its own lofty height, placing the holiness of God in the centre, and founding upon this the demand for holiness which it made upon its professors; but the voluptuous, sensual teaching of idolatry, pandering as it did to human corruption, just because it was from this it had originally sprung" (Hengstenberg's *Christology*). This seems to explain the fact, that whereas, according to the prophecies of Amos and Hosea, the worship of Baal still prevailed in Israel under the kings of the house of Jehu, according to the account given in the books of Kings Jehu had rooted out Baal along with the royal house of Ahab (2 Kings x. 28). Jehu had merely broken down the outward supremacy of the Baal-worship, and raised up the worship of

Jehovah once more, under the symbols of oxen or calves, into the state-religion. But this worship of Jehovah was itself a Baal-worship, since, although it was to Jehovah that the legal sacrifices were offered, and although His name was outwardly confessed, and His feasts were observed (Hos. ii. 13), yet in heart Jehovah Himself was made into a Baal, so that the people even called Him their Baal (Hos. ii. 16), and observed "the days of the Baals" (Hos. ii. 13).

This inward apostasy from the Lord, notwithstanding which the people still continued to worship Him outwardly and rely upon His covenant, had of necessity a very demoralizing influence upon the national life. With the breach of the fundamental law of the covenant, viz. of the prohibition against making any likeness of Jehovah, or worshipping images made by men, more especially in consequence of the manner in which this prohibition was bound up with the divine authority of the law, all reverence not only for the holiness of the law of God, but for the holy God Himself, was undermined. Unfaithfulness towards God and His word begot faithlessness towards men. With the neglect to love God with all the heart, love to brethren also disappeared. And spiritual adultery had carnal adultery as its inevitable consequence, and that all the more because voluptuousness formed a leading trait in the character of the idolatry of Hither Asia. Hence all the bonds of love, of chastity, and of order were loosened and broken, and Hosea uttered this complaint: "There is no truthfulness, and no love, and no knowledge of God in the land. Cursing, and murder, and stealing, and adultery; they break out, and blood reaches to blood" (ch. iv. 1, 2). No king of Israel could put an effectual stop to this corruption. By abolishing the worship of the calves, he would have rendered the very existence of the kingdom doubtful. For if once the religious wall of division between the kingdom of Israel and the kingdom of Judah had been removed, the political distinction would have been in danger of following. And this was really what the founder of the kingdom of the ten tribes feared (1 Kings xii. 27), inasmuch as the royal family that occupied the throne had received no promise from God of permanent continuance. Founded as it was in rebellion against the royal house of David, which God Himself had chosen, it bore within itself from the very first the spirit of

rebellion and revolution, and therefore the germs of internal self-destruction. Under these circumstances, even the long, and in outward respects very prosperous, reign of Jeroboam II. could not possibly heal the deep-seated evils, but only helped to increase the apostasy and immorality; since the people, whilst despising the riches of the goodness and mercy of God, looked upon their existing prosperity as simply a reward for their righteousness before God, and were therefore confirmed in their self-security and sins. And this was a delusion which false prophets loved to foster by predictions of continued prosperity (cf. ch. ix. 7). The consequence was, that when Jeroboam died, the judgments of God began to burst upon the incorrigible nation. There followed, first of all, an anarchy of eleven or twelve years; and it was not till after this that his son Zechariah succeeded in ascending the throne. But at the end of no more than six months he was murdered by Shallum, whilst he in his turn was put to death after a reign of one month by Menahem, who reigned ten years at Samaria (2 Kings xv. 14, 17). In his reign the Assyrian king Phul invaded the land, and was only induced to leave it by the payment of a heavy tribute (2 Kings xv. 19, 20). Menahem was followed by his son Pekachiah in the fiftieth year of Uzziah's reign; but after a reign of hardly two years he was murdered by his charioteer, Pekah the son of Remaliah, who held the throne for twenty years (2 Kings xv. 22-27), but who accelerated the ruin of his kingdom by forming an alliance with the king of Syria to attack the brother kingdom of Judah (Isa. vii.). For king Ahaz, when hard pressed by Pekah and the Syrians, called to his help the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser, who not only conquered Damascus and destroyed the Syrian kingdom, but took a portion of the kingdom of Israel, viz. the whole of the land to the east of the Jordan, and carried away its inhabitants into exile (2 Kings xv. 29). Hoshea the son of Elah conspired against Pekah, and slew him in the fourth year of the reign of Ahaz; after which, an eight years' anarchy threw the kingdom into confusion, so that it was not till the twelfth year of Ahaz that Hoshea obtained possession of the throne. Very shortly afterwards, however, he came into subjection to the Assyrian king Shalmanezar, and paid him tribute. But after a time, in reliance upon the help of Egypt, he broke his oath of fealty to

the king of Assyria; whereupon Shalmanezzer returned, conquered the entire land, including the capital, and led Israel captive into Assyria (2 Kings xv. 30, xvii. 1-6).

3. THE BOOK OF HOSEA.—Called as he was at such a time as this to proclaim to his people the word of the Lord, Hosea necessarily occupied himself chiefly in bearing witness against the apostasy and corruption of Israel, and in preaching the judgment of God. The ungodliness and wickedness had become so great, that the destruction of the kingdom was inevitable; and the degenerate nation was obliged to be given up into the power of the Assyrians, the existing representatives of the heathen power of the world. But as God the Lord has no pleasure in the death of the sinner, but that he should turn and live, He would not exterminate the rebellious tribes of the people of His possession from the earth, or put them away for ever from His face, but would humble them deeply by severe and long-continued chastisement, in order that He might bring them to a consciousness of their great guilt and lead them to repentance, so that He might at length have mercy upon them once more, and save them from everlasting destruction. Consequently, even in the book of Hosea, promises go side by side with threatenings and announcements of punishment, and that not merely as the general hope of better days, kept continually before the corrected nation by the all-pitying love of Jehovah, which forgives even faithlessness, and seeks out that which has gone astray (Sims.), but in the form of a very distinct announcement of the eventual restoration of the nation, when corrected by punishment, and returning in sorrow and repentance to the Lord its God, and to David its king (ch. iii. 5),—an announcement founded upon the inviolable character of the divine covenant of grace, and rising up to the thought that the Lord will also redeem from hell and save from death, yea, will destroy both death and hell (ch. xiii. 14). Because Jehovah had married Israel in His covenant of grace, but Israel, like an unfaithful wife, had broken the covenant with its God, and gone a whoring after idols; God, by virtue of the holiness of His love, must punish its unfaithfulness and apostasy. His love, however, would not destroy, but would save that which was lost. This love bursts out in the flame of holy wrath, which

burns in all the threatening and reproachful addresses of Hosea. In this wrath, however, it is not the consuming fire of an Elijah that burns so brightly; on the contrary, a gentle sound of divine grace and mercy is ever heard in the midst of the flame, so that the wrath but gives expression to the deepest anguish at the perversity of the nation, which will not suffer itself to be brought to a consciousness of the fact that its salvation rests with Jehovah its God, and with Him alone, either by the severity of the divine chastisements, or by the friendliness with which God has drawn Israel to Himself as with cords of love. This anguish of love at the faithlessness of Israel so completely fills the mind of the prophet, that his rich and lively imagination shines perpetually by means of changes of figure and fresh turns of thought, to open the eyes of the sinful nation to the abyss of destruction by which it is standing, in order if possible to rescue it from ruin. The deepest sympathy gives to his words a character of excitement, so that for the most part he merely hints at the thoughts in the briefest possible manner, instead of carefully elaborating them, passing with rapid changes from one figure and simile to another, and moving forward in short sentences and oracular utterances rather than in a calmly finished address, so that his addresses are frequently obscure, and hardly intelligible.<sup>1</sup>

His book does not contain a collection of separate addresses delivered to the people, but, as is generally admitted now, a general summary of the leading thoughts contained in his public addresses. The book is divisible into two parts, viz. ch. i.-iii. and iv.-xiv., which give the kernel of his prophetic labours, the one in a more condensed, and the other in a more elaborate form. In the *first* part, which contains the "beginning of the word of

<sup>1</sup> Jerome says of him, "*commaticus est et quasi per sententias loquens*;" and Ewald discovers in his style "a kernel-like fulness of language, and, notwithstanding many strong figures, which indicate not only poetical boldness and originality but also the tolerably upright thought of those times, a very great tenderness and warmth of language." His diction is distinguished by many peculiar words and forms, such as נִאֲמָתִים (ch. ii. 4), אָהַבְתִּי הָעָם (ch. iv. 18), נָחָה (ch. v. 13), שְׁעָרֵי צִדֹן (ch. vi. 10), הִבְהֵתִים (ch. viii. 13), הִלְאִי אֲבֹתַי (ch. xiii. 5); and by peculiar constructions, such as לֹא עָלַי (ch. vii. 16), אֶלְעָל (ch. xi. 7), מְרִיבֵי בָהֶן (ch. iv. 4), and many others.

Jehovah by Hosea" (ch. i. 2), the prophet first of all describes, in the symbolical form of a marriage, contracted by the command of God with an adulterous woman, the spiritual adultery of the ten tribes of Israel, *i.e.* their falling away from Jehovah into idolatry, together with its consequences,—namely, the rejection of the rebellious tribes by the Lord, and their eventual return to God, and restoration to favour (ch. i. 2, ii. 3). He then announces, in simple prophetic words, not only the chastisements and punishments that will come from God, and bring the people to a knowledge of the ruinous consequences of their departure from God, but also the manifestations of mercy by which the Lord will secure the true conversion of those who are humbled by suffering, and their eventual blessedness through the conclusion of a covenant founded in righteousness and grace (ch. ii. 4–25); and this attitude on the part of God towards His people is then confirmed by a symbolical picture in ch. iii.

In the second part, these truths are expanded in a still more elaborate manner; but the condemnation of the idolatry and moral corruption of Israel, and the announcement of the destruction of the kingdom of the ten tribes, predominate,—the saving prediction of the eventual restoration and blessedness of those, who come to the consciousness of the depth of their own fall, being but briefly touched upon. This part, again, cannot be divided into separate addresses, as there is an entire absence of all reliable indices, just as in the last part of Isaiah (ch. xl.–lxvi.); but, like the latter, it falls into three large, unequal sections, in each of which the prophetic address advances from an accusation of the nation generally and in its several ranks, to a description of the coming punishment, and finishes up with the prospect of the ultimate rescue of the punished nation. At the same time, an evident progress is discernible in the three, not indeed of the kind supposed by Ewald, namely, that the address contained in ch. iv.–ix. 9 advances from the accusation itself to the contemplation of the punishment proved to be necessary, and then rises through further retrospective glances at the better days of old, at the destination of the church, and at the everlasting love, to brighter prospects and the firmest hopes; nor in that proposed by De Wette, *viz.* that the wrath becomes more and more threatening from ch. viii. onwards, and the

destruction of Israel comes out more and more clearly before the reader's eye. The relation in which the three sections stand to one another is rather the following: In the first, ch. iv.-vi. 3, the religious and moral degradation of Israel is exhibited in all its magnitude, together with the judgment which follows upon the heels of this corruption; and at the close the conversion and salvation aimed at in this judgment are briefly indicated. In the second and much longer section, ch. vi. 4-xi. 11, the incorrigibility of the sinful nation, or the obstinate persistence of Israel in idolatry and unrighteousness, in spite of the warnings and chastisements of God, is first exposed and condemned (ch. vi. 4-vii. 16); then, secondly, the judgment to which they are liable is elaborately announced as both inevitable and terrible (ch. viii. 1-ix. 9); and thirdly, by pointing out the unfaithfulness which Israel has displayed towards its God from the very earliest times, the prophet shows that it has deserved nothing but destruction from off the face of the earth (ix. 10-xi. 8), and that it is only the mercy of God which will restrain the wrath, and render the restoration of Israel possible (ch. xi. 9-11). In the third section (ch. xii.-xiv.) the ripeness of Israel for judgment is confirmed by proofs drawn from its falling into Canaanitish ways, notwithstanding the long-suffering, love, and fidelity with which God has always shown Himself to be its helper and redeemer (ch. xii. xiii.). To this there is appended a solemn appeal to return to the Lord; and the whole concludes with a promise, that the faithful covenant God will display the fulness of His love again to those who return to Him with a sincere confession of their guilt, and will pour upon them the riches of His blessing (ch. xiv.).

This division of the book differs, indeed, from all the attempts that have previously been made; but it has the warrant of its correctness in the three times repeated promise (vi. 1-3, xi. 9-11, and xiv. 2-9), by which each of the supposed sections is rounded off. And within these sections we also meet with pauses, by which they are broken up into smaller groups, resembling strophes, although this further grouping of the prophet's words is not formed into uniform strophes.<sup>1</sup> For further remarks on this point, see the Exposition.

<sup>1</sup> All attempts that have been made to break up the book into different prophecies, belonging to different periods, are wrecked upon the contents



From what has been said, it clearly follows that Hosea himself wrote out the quintessence of his prophecies, as a witness of the Lord against the degenerate nation, at the close of his prophetic career, and in the book which bears his name. The preservation of this book, on the destruction of the kingdom of the ten tribes, may be explained very simply from the fact that, on account of the intercourse carried on between the prophets of the Lord in the two kingdoms, it found its way to Judah soon after the time of its composition, and was there spread abroad in the circle of the prophets, and so preserved. We find, for example, that Jeremiah has used it again and again in his prophecies (compare Aug. Kueper, *Jeremias librorum ss. interpres atque vindex*. Berol. 1837, p. 67 seq.). For the exegetical writings on Hosea, see my *Lehrbuch der Einleitung*, p. 275.

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## EXPOSITION.

### I. ISRAEL'S ADULTERY.—CHAP. I.—III.

On the ground of the relation hinted at even in the Pentateuch (Ex. xxxiv. 15, 16; Lev. xvii. 7, xx. 5, 6; Num. xiv. 33; Deut. xxxii. 16–21), and still further developed in the Song of Solomon and Ps. xlv., where the gracious bond existing between the Lord and the nation of His choice is represented under the figure of a marriage, which Jehovah had contracted with Israel, the falling away of the ten tribes of Israel from Jehovah into idolatry is exhibited as whoredom and adultery, in the following manner. In the *first* section (i. 2–ii. 3), God commands the prophet to marry a wife of whoredoms with children of whoredoms, and gives names to the children born to the prophet by this wife, which indicate the fruits of idolatry,

of the book itself; single sections being obliged to be made into prophetic addresses, or declared to be such, and the period of their origin being merely determined by arbitrary conjectures and assumptions, or by fanciful interpretations, *e.g.* as that of the *chōdesh*, or new moon, in ch. v. 7, which is supposed to refer to the reign of Shallum, who only reigned one month.

viz. the rejection and putting away of Israel on the part of God (ch. i. 2–9), with the appended promise of the eventual restoration to favour of the nation thus put away (ch. ii. 1–3). In the *second* section (ch. ii. 4–25), the Lord announces that He will put an end to the whoredom, *i.e.* to the idolatry of Israel, and by means of judgments will awaken in it a longing to return to Him (vers. 4–15), that He will thereupon lead the people once more through the wilderness, and, by the renewal of His covenant mercies and blessings, will betroth Himself to it for ever in righteousness, mercy, and truth (vers. 16–25). In the *third* section (ch. iii.) the prophet is commanded to love once more a wife beloved of her husband, but one who had committed adultery; and after having secured her, to put her into such a position that it will be impossible for her to carry on her whoredom any longer. And the explanation given is, that the Israelites will sit for a long time without a king, without sacrifice, and without divine worship, but that they will afterwards return, will seek Jehovah their God, and David their king, and will rejoice in the goodness of the Lord at the end of the days. Consequently the falling away of the ten tribes from the Lord, their expulsion into exile, and the restoration of those who come to a knowledge of their sin—in other words, the guilt and punishment of Israel, and its restoration to favour—form the common theme of all three sections, and that in the following manner: In the first, the sin, the punishment, and the eventual restoration of Israel, are depicted symbolically in all their magnitude; in the second, the guilt and punishment, and also the restoration and renewal of the relation of grace, are still further explained in simple prophetic words; whilst in the third, this announcement is visibly set forth in a new symbolical act.

In both the first and third sections, the prophet's announcement is embodied in a symbolical act; and the question arises here, Whether the marriage of the prophet with an adulterous woman, which is twice commanded by God, is to be regarded as a marriage that was actually consummated, or merely as an internal occurrence, or as a parabolical representation.<sup>1</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Compare on this point the fuller discussion of the question by John Marck, *Diatribe de muliere fornicationum*, Lugd. B. 1696, reprinted in his *Comment. in 12 proph. min.*, ed. Pfaff. 1734, p. 214 sqq.; and Hengsten-

supporters of a marriage outwardly consummated lay the principal stress upon the simple words of the text. The words of ver. 2, "Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms," and of ver. 3, "So he went and took Gomer . . . which conceived," etc., are so definite and so free from ambiguity, that it is impossible, they think, to take them with a good conscience in any other sense than an outward and historical one. But since even Kurtz, who has thrown the argument into this form, feels obliged to admit, with reference to some of the symbolical actions of the prophets, *e.g.* Jer. xxv. 15 sqq. and Zech. xi., that they were not actually and outwardly performed, it is obvious that the mere words are not sufficient of themselves to decide the question *à priori*, whether such an action took place in the objective outer world, or only inwardly, in the spiritual intuition of the prophet himself.<sup>1</sup> The reference to Isa. vii. 3, and viii. 3, 4, as analogous cases, does apparently strengthen the conclusion that the occurrence was an outward one; but on closer exami-

berg's *Christology*, i. p. 177 sqq., translation, in which, after a historical survey of the different views that have been expressed, he defends the opinion that the occurrence was real, but not outward; whilst Kurtz (*Die Ehe des Propheten Hosea*, 1859) has entered the lists in defence of the assumption that it was a marriage actually and outwardly consummated.

<sup>1</sup> It is true that Kurtz endeavours to deprive this concession of all its force, by setting up the canon, that of all the symbolical actions of the prophets the following alone cannot be interpreted as implying either an outward performance or outward experience; viz. (1) those in which the narration itself expressly indicates a visionary basis or a parabolical fiction, and (2) those in which the thing described is physically impossible without the intervention of a miracle. But apart from the arbitrary nature of this second canon, which is apparent from the fact that the prophets both performed and experienced miracles, the symbolical actions recorded in Jer. xxv. and Zech. xi. do not fall under either the first or second of these canons. Such a journey as the one which Jeremiah is commanded to take (Jer. xxv.), viz. to the kings of Egypt, of the Philistines, the Phœnicians, the Arabians, the Edomites, the Ammonites, the Syrians, of Media, Elam, and Babylon, cannot be pronounced an absolute impossibility, however improbable it may be. Still less can the taking of two shepherds' staves, to which the prophet gives the symbolical names Beauty and Bands, or the slaying of three wicked shepherds in one month (Zech. xi.), be said to be physically impossible, notwithstanding the assertion of Kurtz, in which he twists the fact so clearly expressed in the biblical text, viz. that "a staff Beauty does not lie within the sphere of physically outward existence, any more than a staff Bands."

nation, the similarity between the two passages in Isaiah and the one under consideration is outweighed by the differences that exist between them. It is true that Isaiah gave his two sons names with symbolical meanings, and that in all probability by divine command; but nothing is said about his having married his wife by the command of God, nor is the birth of the first-named son ever mentioned at all. Consequently, all that can be inferred from Isaiah is, that the symbolical names of the children of the prophet Hosea furnish no evidence against the outward reality of the marriage in question. Again, the objection, that the command to marry a wife of whoredoms, if understood as referring to an outward act, would be opposed to the divine holiness, and the divine command, that priests should not marry a harlot, cannot be taken as decisive. For what applied to priests cannot be transferred without reserve to prophets; and the remark, which is quite correct in itself, that God as the Holy One could not command an immoral act, does not touch the case, but simply rests upon a misapprehension of the divine command, viz. upon the idea that God commanded the prophet to beget children with an immoral person without a lawful marriage, or that the "children of whoredom," whom Hosea was to take along with the "wife of whoredom," were the three children whom she bare to him (Hos. i. 3, 6, 8); in which case either the children begotten by the prophet are designated as "children of whoredom," or the wife continued her adulterous habits even after the prophet had married her, and bare to the prophet illegitimate children. But neither of these assumptions has any foundation in the text. The divine command, "Take thee a wife of whoredom, and children of whoredom," neither implies that the wife whom the prophet was to marry was living at that time in virgin chastity, and was called a wife of whoredom simply to indicate that, as the prophet's lawful wife, she would fall into adultery; nor even that the children of whoredom whom the prophet was to take along with the wife of whoredom are the three children whose birth is recorded in ch. i. 3, 6, 8. The meaning is rather that the prophet is to take, along with the wife, the children whom she already had, and whom she had born as a harlot before her marriage with the prophet. If, therefore, we assume that the prophet was commanded to take this woman and her children,

for the purpose, as Jerome has explained it, of rescuing the woman from her sinful course, and bringing up her neglected children under paternal discipline and care; such a command as this would be by no means at variance with the holiness of God, but would rather correspond to the compassionate love of God, which accepts the lost sinner, and seeks to save him. And, as Kurtz has well shown, it cannot be objected to this, that by such a command and the prophet's obedience on his first entering upon his office, all the beneficial effects of that office would inevitably be frustrated. For if it were a well-known fact, that the woman whom the prophet married had hitherto been leading a profligate life, and if the prophet declared freely and openly that he had taken her as his wife for that very reason, and with this intention, according to the command of God; the marriage, the shame of which the prophet had taken upon himself in obedience to the command of God, and in self-denying love to his people, would be a practical and constant sermon to the nation, which might rather promote than hinder the carrying out of his official work. For he did with this woman what Jehovah was doing with Israel, to reveal to the nation its own sin in so impressive a manner, that it could not fail to recognise it in all its glaring and damnable character. But however satisfactorily the divine command could be vindicated on the supposition that this was its design, we cannot found any argument upon this in favour of the outward reality of the prophet's marriage, for the simple reason that the supposed object is neither expressed nor hinted at in the text. According to the distinct meaning of the words, the prophet was to take a "wife of whoredom," for the simple purpose of begetting children by her, whose significant names were to set before the people the disastrous fruits of their spiritual whoredom. The behaviour of the woman after the marriage is no more the point in question than the children of whoredom whom the prophet was to take along with the woman; whereas this is what we should necessarily expect, if the object of the marriage commanded had been the reformation of the woman herself and of her illegitimate children. The very fact that, according to the distinct meaning of the words, there was no other object for the marriage than to beget children, who should receive significant names, renders the assumption of a

real marriage, *i.e.* of a marriage outwardly contracted and consummated, very improbable.

And this supposition becomes absolutely untenable in the case of ch. iii., where Jehovah says to the prophet (ver. 1), "Go again, love a woman beloved by the husband, and committing adultery;" and the prophet, in order to fulfil the divine command, purchases the woman for a certain price (ver. 2). The indefinite expression *'isshâh*, a wife, instead of thy wife, or at any rate the wife, and still more the purchase of the woman, are quite sufficient of themselves to overthrow the opinion, that the prophet is here directed to seek out once more his former wife Gomer, who has been unfaithful, and has run away, and to be reconciled to her again. Ewald therefore observes, and Kurtz supports the assertion, that the pronoun in "I bought *her* to me," according to the simple meaning of the words, cannot refer to any adulteress you please who had left her husband, but must refer to one already known, and therefore points back to ch. i. But with such paralogisms as these we may insert all kinds of things in the text of Scripture. The suffix in *וַאֲפֶרָה*, "I bought *her*" (ver. 2), simply refers to the "woman beloved of her friend" mentioned in ver. 1, and does not prove in the remotest degree, that the "woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress," is the same person as the Gomer mentioned in ch. i. The indefiniteness of *'isshâh* without the article, is neither removed by the fact that, in the further course of the narrative, this (indefinite) woman is referred to again, nor by the examples adduced by Kurtz, viz. *וַיִּשְׁתַּלַּח* in ch. iv. 11, and *וַיִּשְׁתַּלַּח* in ch. v. 11, since any linguist knows that these are examples of a totally different kind. The perfectly indefinite *אִשָּׁה* receives, no doubt, a more precise definition from the predicates *וַיִּמְנָאֶפֶת*, so that we cannot understand it as meaning any adulteress whatever; but it receives no such definition as would refer back to ch. i. A woman beloved of her friend, *i.e.* of her husband, and committing adultery, is a woman who, although beloved by her husband, or notwithstanding the love shown to her by her husband, commits adultery. Through the participles *וַאֲהֵבָת* and *וַיִּמְנָאֶפֶת*, the love of the friend (or husband), and the adultery of the wife, are represented as contemporaneous, in precisely the same manner as in the explanatory clauses which follow: "as

Jehovah loveth the children of Israel, and they turn to other gods!" If the *'issâh* thus defined had been the *Gomer* mentioned in ch. i., the divine command would necessarily have been thus expressed: either, "Go, and love again the wife beloved by her husband, who has committed adultery;" or, "Love again thy wife, who is still loved by her husband, although she has committed adultery." But it is quite as evident that this thought cannot be contained in the words of the text, as that out of two co-ordinate participles it is impossible that the one should have the force of the future or present, and the other that of the pluperfect. Nevertheless, Kurtz has undertaken to prove the possibility of the impossible. He observes, first of all, that we are not justified, of course, in giving to "love" the meaning "love again," as Hofmann does, because the husband has never ceased to love his wife, in spite of her adultery; but for all that, the explanation, *restituere amoris signa* (restore the pledges of affection), is the only intelligible one; since it cannot be the love itself, but only the manifestation of love, that is here referred to. But the idea of "again" cannot be smuggled into the text by any such arbitrary distinction as this. There is nothing in the text to the effect that the husband had not ceased to love his wife, in spite of her adultery; and this is simply an inference drawn from ch. ii. 11, through the identification of the prophet with Jehovah, and the tacit assumption that the prophet had withdrawn from Gomer the expressions of his love, of all which there is not a single syllable in ch. i. This assumption, and the inference drawn from it, would only be admissible, if the identity of the woman, beloved by her husband and committing adultery, with the prophet's wife Gomer, were an established fact. But so long as this is not proved, the argument merely moves in a circle, assuming the thing to be demonstrated as already proved. But even granting that "love" were equivalent to "love again," or "manifest thy love again to a woman beloved of her husband, and committing adultery," this could not mean the same thing as "go to thy former wife, and prove to her by word and deed the continuance of thy love," so long as, according to the simplest rules of logic, "a wife" is not equivalent to "thy wife." And according to sound logical rules, the identity of the *'issâh* in ch. iii. 1 and the *Gomer* of

ch. i. 3 cannot be inferred from the fact that the expression used in ch. iii. 1 is, "Go love a woman," and not "Go take a wife," or from the fact that in ch. i. 2 the woman is simply called a whore, not an adulteress, whereas in ch. iii. 1 she is described as an adulteress, not as a whore. The words "love a woman," as distinguished from "take a wife," may indeed be understood, apart from the connection with ver. 2, as implying that the conclusion of a marriage is alluded to; but they can never denote "the restoration of a marriage bond that had existed before," as Kurtz supposes. And the distinction between ch. i. 2, where the woman is described as "a woman of whoredom," and ch. iii. 1, where she is called "an adulteress," points far more to a distinction between Gomer and the adulterous woman, than to their identity.

But ch. iii. 2, "I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver," etc., points even more than ch. iii. 1 to a difference between the women in ch. i. and ch. iii. The verb *kârâh*, to purchase or acquire by trading, presupposes that the woman had not yet been in the prophet's possession. The only way in which Kurtz is able to evade this conclusion, is by taking the fifteen pieces of silver mentioned in ver. 2, not as the price paid by the prophet to purchase the woman as his wife, but in total disregard of *וְאִמֶּר אֵלָיָהּ*, in ch. iii. 3, as the cost of her maintenance, which the prophet gave to the woman for the period of her detention, during which she was to sit, and not go with any man. But the arbitrary nature of this explanation is apparent at once. According to the reading of the words, the prophet bought the woman to himself for fifteen pieces of silver and an ephah and a half of barley, *i.e.* bought her to be his wife, and then said to her, "Thou shalt sit for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot," etc. There is not only not a word in ch. iii. about his having assigned her the amount stated for her maintenance; but it cannot be inferred from ch. ii. 9, 11, because there it is not the prophet's wife who is referred to, but Israel personified as a harlot and adulteress. And that what is there affirmed concerning Israel cannot be applied without reserve to explain the symbolical description in ch. iii., is evident from the simple fact, that the conduct of Jehovah towards Israel is very differently described in ch. ii., from the course which the prophet is said to have observed towards his wife in ch. iii. 3.



In ch. ii. 7, the adulterous woman (Israel) says, "I will go and return to my former husband, for then was it better with me than now;" and Jehovah replies to this (ch. ii. 8, 9), "Because she has not discovered that I gave her corn and new wine, etc.; therefore will I return, and take away my corn from her in the season thereof, and my wine," etc. On the other hand, according to the view adopted by Kurtz, the prophet took his wife back again because she felt remorse, and assigned her the necessary maintenance for many days.

From all this it follows, that by the woman spoken of in ch. iii., we cannot understand the wife Gomer mentioned in ch. i. The "wife beloved of the companion (*i.e.* of her husband), and committing adultery," is a different person from the daughter of Diblathaim, by whom the prophet had three children (ch. i.). If, then, the prophet really contracted and consummated the marriage commanded by God, we must adopt the explanation already favoured by the earlier commentators, viz. that in the interval between ch. i. and ch. iii. Gomer had either died, or been put away by her husband because she would not repent. But we are only warranted in adopting such a solution as this, provided that the assumption of a marriage consummated outwardly either has been or can be conclusively established. And as this is not the case, we are not at liberty to supply things at which the text does not even remotely hint. If, then, in accordance with the text, we must understand the divine commands in ch. i. and iii. as relating to two successive marriages on the part of the prophet with unchaste women, every probability is swept away that the command of God and its execution by the prophet fall within the sphere of external reality. For even if, in case of need, the first command, as explained above, could be vindicated as worthy of God, the same vindication would not apply to the command to contract a second marriage of a similar kind. The very end which God is supposed to have had in view in the command to contract such a marriage as this, could only be attained by *one* marriage. But if Hosea had no sooner dissolved the first marriage, than he proceeded to conclude a second with a person in still worse odour, no one would ever have believed that he did this also in obedience to the command of God. And the divine command itself to contract this second marriage, if it was

intended to be actually consummated, would be quite irreconcilable with the holiness of God. For even if God could command a man to marry a harlot, for the purpose of rescuing her from her life of sin and reforming her, it would certainly be at variance with the divine holiness, to command the prophet to marry a person who had either broken the marriage vow already, or who would break it, notwithstanding her husband's love; since God, as the Holy One, cannot possibly sanction adultery.<sup>1</sup> Consequently no other course is left to us, than to picture to ourselves Hosea's marriages as internal events, *i.e.* as merely carried out in that inward and spiritual intuition in which the word of God was addressed to him; and this removes all the difficulties that beset the assumption of marriages contracted in outward reality. In occurrences which merely happened to a prophet in spiritual intercourse with God, not only would all reflections as to their being worthy or not worthy of God be absent, when the prophet related them to the people, for the purpose of impressing their meaning upon their hearts, inasmuch as it was simply their significance, which came into consideration and was to be laid to heart; but this would also be the case with the other difficulties to which the external view is exposed—such, for example, as the questions, why the prophet was to take not only a woman of whoredom, but children of whoredom also, when they are never referred to again in the course of the narrative; or what became of Gomer, whether she was dead, or had been put away, when the prophet was commanded the second time to love an adulterous woman—since the sign falls back behind the thing signified.

But if, according to this, we must regard the marriages

<sup>1</sup> This objection to the outward consummation of the prophet's marriage cannot be deprived of its force by the remark made by the older Rivetus, to the effect that "things which are dishonourable in themselves, cannot be honourable in vision, or when merely imaginary." For there is an essential difference between a merely symbolical representation, and the actual performance of anything. The instruction given to a prophet to set forth a sin in a symbolical form, for the purpose of impressing upon the hearts of the people its abominable character, and the punishment it deserved, is not at variance with the holiness of God; whereas the command to commit a sin would be. God, as the Holy One, cannot abolish the laws of morality, or command anything actually immoral, without contradicting Himself, or denying His own nature.

enjoined upon the prophet as simply facts of inward experience, which took place in his own spiritual intuition, we must not set them down as nothing more than parables which he related to the people, or as poetical fictions, since such assumptions as these are at variance with the words themselves, and reduce the statement, "God said to Hosea," to an unmeaning rhetorical phrase. The inward experience has quite as much reality and truth as the outward; whereas a parable or a poetical fiction has simply a certain truth, so far as the subjective imagination is concerned, but no reality.

Ch. i. 1 contains the *heading* to the whole of the book of Hosea, the contents of which have already been discussed in the Introduction, and defended against the objections that have been raised, so that there is no tenable ground for refusing to admit its integrity and genuineness. The *t'chillath dibber-Y'hovâh* with which ver. 2 introduces the prophecy, necessarily presupposes a heading announcing the period of the prophet's ministry; and the "twisted, un-Hebrew expression," which Hitzig properly finds to be so objectionable in the translation, "in the days of Jeroboam, etc., was the commencement of Jehovah's speaking," etc., does not prove that the heading is spurious, but simply that Hitzig's construction is false, *i.e.* that *t'chillath dibber-Y'hovâh* is not in apposition to ver. 1, but the heading in ver. 1 contains an independent statement; whilst the notice as to time, with which ver. 2 opens, does not belong to the heading of the whole book, but simply to the prophecy which follows in ch. i.—iii.

ISRAEL THE ADULTERESS, AND HER CHILDREN.—CHAP. I.  
2—II. 3.

For the purpose of depicting before the eyes of the sinful people the judgment to which Israel has exposed itself through its apostasy from the Lord, Hosea is to marry a prostitute, and beget children by her, whose names are so appointed by Jehovah as to point out the evil fruits of the departure from God. Ver. 2. "*At first, when Jehovah spake to Hosea, Jehovah said to him, Go, take thee a wife of whoredom, and children of whoredom; for whoring the land whoreth away from Jehovah.*" The marriage which the prophet is commanded to contract, is to

set forth the fact that the kingdom of Israel has fallen away from the Lord its God, and is sunken in idolatry. Hosea is to commence his prophetic labours by exhibiting this fact. תְּחִלָּתָא דִּבְרָא: literally, "at the commencement of 'Jehovah spake,'" i.e. at the commencement of Jehovah's speaking (*dibber* is not an infinitive, but a perfect, and *t'chillath* an accusative of time (Ges. § 118, 2); and through the constructive the following clause is subordinated to *t'chillath* as a substantive idea: see Ges. § 123, 3, Anm. 1; Ewald, § 332, c.). דִּבְרָא with אֵל, not to speak to a person, or through any one (אֵל is not = אִלָּא), but to speak with (lit. in) a person, expressive of the inwardness or urgency of the speaking (cf. Num. xii. 6, 8; Hab. ii. 1; Zech. i. 9, etc.). "Take to thyself:" i.e. marry (a wife). אִשָּׁת זְנוּנִים is stronger than זִנוּנָה. A woman of whoredom, is a woman whose business or means of livelihood consists in prostitution. Along with the woman, Hosea is to take children of prostitution as well. The meaning of this is, of course, not that he is first of all to take the woman, and then beget children of prostitution by her, which would require that the two objects should be connected with קַח *per zeugma*, in the sense of "*accipe uxorem et suscipe ex ea liberos*" (Drus.), or "*sume tibi uxorem forn. et fac tibi filios forn.*" (Vulg.). The children begotten by the prophet from a married harlot-wife, could not be called *yaldē z'nūnīm*, since they were not illegitimate children, but legitimate children of the prophet himself; nor is the assumption, that the three children born by the woman, according to vers. 3, 6, 8, were born in adultery, and that the prophet was not their father, in harmony with ver. 3, "he took Gomer, and she conceived and bare him a son." Nor can this mode of escaping from the difficulty, which is quite at variance with the text, be vindicated by an appeal to the connection between the figure and the fact. For though this connection "necessarily requires that both the children and the mother should stand in the same relation of estrangement from the lawful husband and father," as Hengstenberg argues; it neither requires that we should assume that the mother had been a chaste virgin before her marriage to the prophet, nor that the children whom she bare to her husband were begotten in adultery, and merely palmed off upon the prophet as his own. The marriage which the prophet was to contract, was

simply intended to symbolize the relation already existing between Jehovah and Israel, and not the way in which it had come into existence. The "wife of whoredoms" does not represent the nation of Israel in its virgin state at the conclusion of the covenant at Sinai, but the nation of the ten tribes in its relation to Jehovah at the time of the prophet himself, when the nation, considered as a whole, had become a wife of whoredom, and in its several members resembled children of whoredom. The reference to the children of whoredom, along with the wife of whoredom, indicates unquestionably *à priori*, that the divine command did not contemplate an actual and outward marriage, but simply a symbolical representation of the relation in which the idolatrous Israelites were then standing to the Lord their God. The explanatory clause, "for the land whoredeth," etc., clearly points to this. הָאָרֶץ, "the land," for the population of the land (cf. ch. iv. 1). וְנָה מֵאֲחֵרֵי י', to whore from Jehovah, i.e. to fall away from Him (see at ch. iv. 12).

Ver. 3. "And he went and took Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim; and she conceived, and bare him a son." Gomer does indeed occur in Gen. x. 2, 3, as the name of a people; but we never meet with it as the name of either a man or a woman, and judging from the analogy of the names of her children, it is chosen with reference to the meaning of the word itself. Gomer signifies perfection, completion in a passive sense, and is not meant to indicate destruction or death (Chald. Marck), but the fact that the woman was thoroughly perfected in her whoredom, or that she had gone to the furthest length in prostitution. Diblaim, also, does not occur again as a proper name, except in the names of Moabitish places in Num. xxxiii. 46 (*Almon-diblathaim*) and Jer. xlviii. 22 (*Beth-diblathaim*); it is formed from *d'bhēlāh*, like the form 'Ephraim, and in the sense of *d'bhēlīm*, fig-cakes. "Daughter of fig-cakes," equivalent to liking fig-cakes, in the same sense as "loving grape-cakes" in ch. iii. 1, viz. *deliciis dedita*.<sup>1</sup> The symbolical interpretation of these names is not affected by the fact that they are not explained, like those of the children in vers. 4 sqq., since this

<sup>1</sup> This is essentially the interpretation given by Jerome: "Therefore is a wife taken out of Israel by Hosea, as the type of the Lord and Saviour, viz. one accomplished in fornication, and a perfect daughter of pleasure (*filia voluptatis*), which seems so sweet and pleasant to those who enjoy it."

may be accounted for very simply from the circumstance, that the woman does not now receive the names for the first time, but that she had them at the time when the prophet married her.

Ver. 4. *"And Jehovah said to him, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little, and I visit the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel."*

The prophet is directed by God as to the names to be given to his children, because the children, as the fruit of the marriage, as well as the marriage itself, are instructive signs for the idolatrous Israel of the ten tribes. The first son is named *Jezreel*, after the fruitful plain of Jezreel on the north side of the Kishon (see at Josh. xvii. 16); not, however, with any reference to the appellative meaning of the name, viz. "God sows," which is first of all alluded to in the announcement of salvation in ch. ii. 24, 25, but, as the explanation which follows clearly shows, on account of the historical importance which this plain possessed for Israel, and that not merely as the place where the last penal judgment of God was executed in the kingdom of Israel, as Hengstenberg supposes, but on account of the blood-guiltiness of Jezreel, i.e. because Israel had there contracted such blood-guiltiness as was now speedily to be avenged upon the house of Jehu. At the city of *Jezreel*, which stood in this plain, Ahab had previously filled up the measure of his sin by the ruthless murder of Naboth, and had thus brought upon himself that blood-guiltiness for which he had been threatened with the extermination of all his house (1 Kings xxi. 19 sqq.). Then, in order to avenge the blood of all His servants the prophets, which Ahab and Jezebel had shed, the Lord directed Elisha to anoint Jehu king, with a commission to destroy the whole of Ahab's house (2 Kings ix. 1 sqq.). Jehu obeyed this command. Not only did he slay the son of Ahab, viz. king Joram, and cause his body to be thrown upon the portion of land belonging to Naboth the Jezreelite, appealing at the same time to the word of the Lord (2 Kings ix. 21-26), but he also executed the divine judgment upon Jezebel, upon the seventy sons of Ahab, and upon all the rest of the house of Ahab (ch. ix. 30-x. 17), and received the following promise from Jehovah in consequence: "Because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes, because thou hast done to the

house of Ahab according to all that was in mine heart, sons of thine of the fourth generation shall sit upon the throne of Israel" (ch. x. 30). It is evident from this that the blood-guiltiness of Jezreel, which was to be avenged upon the house of Jehu, is not to be sought for in the fact that Jehu had there exterminated the house of Ahab; nor, as Hitzig supposes, in the fact that he had not contented himself with slaying Joram and Jezebel, but had also put Ahaziah of Judah and his brethren to death (2 Kings ix. 27, x. 14), and directed the massacre described in ch. x. 11. For an act which God praises, and for which He gives a promise to the performer, cannot be in itself an act of blood-guiltiness. And the slaughter of Ahaziah and his brethren by Jehu, though not expressly commanded, is not actually blamed in the historical account, because the royal family of Judah had been drawn into the ungodliness of the house of Ahab, through its connection by marriage with that dynasty; and Ahaziah and his brethren, as the sons of Athaliah, a daughter of Ahab, belonged both in descent and disposition to the house of Ahab (2 Kings viii. 18, 26, 27), so that, according to divine appointment, they were to perish with it. Many expositors, therefore, understand by "the blood of Jezreel," simply the many acts of unrighteousness and cruelty which the descendants of Jehu had committed in Jezreel, or "the grievous sins of all kinds committed in the palace, the city, and the nation generally, which were to be expiated by blood, and demanded as it were the punishment of bloodshed" (Marck). But we have no warrant for generalizing the idea of *d'mē* in this way; more especially as the assumption upon which the explanation is founded, viz. that Jezreel was the royal residence of the kings of the house of Jehu, not only cannot be sustained, but is at variance with 2 Kings xv. 8, 13, where Samaria is unquestionably described as the royal residence in the times of Jeroboam II. and his son Zechariah. The blood-guiltinesses (*d'mē*) at Jezreel can only be those which Jehu contracted at Jezreel, viz. the deeds of blood recorded in 2 Kings ix. and x., by which Jehu opened the way for himself to the throne, since there are no others mentioned. The apparent discrepancy, however, that whereas the extermination of the royal family of Ahab by Jehu is commended by God in the second book of Kings, and Jehu is promised the possession of

the throne even to the fourth generation of his sons in consequence, in the passage before us the very same act is charged against him as an act of blood-guiltiness that has to be punished, may be solved very simply by distinguishing between the act in itself, and the motive by which Jehu was instigated. In itself, *i.e.* regarded as the fulfilment of the divine command, the extermination of the family of Ahab was an act by which Jehu could not render himself criminal. But even things desired or commanded by God may become crimes in the case of the performer of them, when he is not simply carrying out the Lord's will as the servant of God, but suffers himself to be actuated by evil and selfish motives, that is to say, when he abuses the divine command, and makes it the mere cloak for the lusts of his own evil heart. That Jehu was actuated by such motives as this, is evident enough from the verdict of the historian in 2 Kings x. 29, 31, that Jehu did indeed exterminate Baal out of Israel, but that he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, from the golden calves at Bethel and Dan, to walk in the law of Jehovah the God of Israel with all his heart. "The massacre, therefore," as Calvin has very correctly affirmed, "was a crime so far as Jehu was concerned, but with God it was righteous vengeance." Even if Jehu did not make use of the divine command as a mere pretext for carrying out the plans of his own ambitious heart, the massacre itself became an act of blood-guiltiness that called for vengeance, from the fact that he did not take heed to walk in the law of God with all his heart, but continued the worship of the calves, that fundamental sin of all the kings of the ten tribes. For this reason, the possession of the throne was only promised to him with a restriction to sons of the fourth generation. On the other hand, it is no argument against this, that "the act referred to cannot be regarded as the chief crime of Jehu and his house," or that "the bloody act, to which the house of Jehu owed its elevation, never appears elsewhere as the cause of the catastrophe which befell this house; but in the case of all the members of his family, the only sin to which prominence is given in the books of Kings, is that they did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam (2 Kings xiii. 2, 11, xiv. 24, xv. 9)." (Hengstenberg). For even though this sin in connection with



religion may be the only one mentioned in the books of Kings, according to the plan of the author of those books, and though this may really have been the principal act of sin; it was through that sin that the bloody deeds of Jehu became such a crime as cried to heaven for vengeance, like the sin of Ahab, and such an one also as Hosea could describe as the blood-guiltiness of Jezreel, which the Lord would avenge upon the house of Jehu at Jezreel, since the object in this case was not to enumerate all the sins of Israel, and the fact that the apostasy of the ten tribes, which is condemned in the book of Kings as the sin of Jeroboam, is represented here under the image of whoredom, shows very clearly that the evil root alone is indicated, out of which all the sins sprang that rendered the kingdom ripe for destruction. Consequently, it is not merely the fall of the existing dynasty which is threatened here, but also the suppression of the kingdom of Israel. The "kingdom of the house of Israel" is obviously not the sovereignty of the house of Jehu in Israel, but the regal sovereignty in Israel. And to this the Lord will put an end עֲדָה, *i.e.* in a short time. The extermination of the house of Jehu occurred not long after the death of Jeroboam, when his son was murdered in connection with Shallum's conspiracy (2 Kings xv. 8 sqq.). And the strength of the kingdom was also paralyzed when the house of Jehu fell, although fifty years elapsed before its complete destruction. For of the five kings who followed Zechariah, only one, viz. Menahem, died a natural death, and was succeeded by his son. The rest were all dethroned and murdered by conspirators, so that the overthrow of the house of Jehu may very well be called "the beginning of the end, the commencement of the process of decomposition" (Hengstenberg: compare the remarks on 2 Kings xv. 10 sqq.).

Ver. 5. "*And it cometh to pass in that day, that I break in pieces the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.*" The indication of time, "in that day," refers not to the overthrow of the house of Jehu, but to the breaking up of the kingdom of Israel, by which it was followed. The bow of Israel, *i.e.* its might (for the bow, as the principal weapon employed in war, is a synecdochical epithet, used to denote the whole of the military force upon which the continued existence of the kingdom depended (Jer. xlix. 35), and is also a symbol of strength generally; *vid.*

Gen. xlix. 24, 1 Sam. ii. 4), is to be broken to pieces in the valley of Jezreel. The paronomasia between Israel and Jezreel is here unmistakeable. And here again Jezreel is not introduced with any allusion to its appellative signification, *i.e.* so that the mention of the name itself is intended to indicate the dispersion or breaking up of the nation, but simply with reference to its natural character, as the great plain in which, from time immemorial, even down to the most recent period, all the great battles have been fought for the possession of the land (cf. v. Raumer, *Pal.* pp. 40, 41). The nation which the Lord had appointed to be the instrument of His judgment is not mentioned here. But the fulfilment shows that the Assyrians are intended, although the brief historical account given in the books of Kings does not notice the place in which the Assyrians gained the decisive victory over Israel; and the statement made by Jerome, to the effect that it was in the valley of Jezreel, is probably simply an inference drawn from this passage.

With the name of the first child, *Jezreel*, the prophet had, as it were with a single stroke, set before the king and the kingdom generally the destruction that awaited them. In order, however, to give further keenness to this threat, and cut off every hope of deliverance, he now announces two other births. Ver. 6. "*And she conceived again, and bare a daughter. And He (Jehovah) said to him, Call her name Unfavoured; for I will no more favour the house of Israel, that I should forgive them.*" The second birth is a female one, not in order to symbolize a more degenerate race, or the greater need of help on the part of the nation, but to get a name answering to the idea, and to set forth, under the figure of sons and daughters, the totality of the nation, both men and women. *Lō' ruchâmāh*, lit. she is not favoured; for *ruchâmāh* is hardly a participle with the ׀ dropped, since לֹא is never found in close connection with the participle (Ewald, § 320, c.), but rather the third pers. perf. fem. in the pausal form. The child receives this name to indicate that the Lord will not continue (אֲחַיִּים) to show compassion towards the rebellious nation, as He hitherto has done, even under Jeroboam II. (2 Kings xiii. 23.) For the purpose of strengthening לֹא אֲחַיִּים, the clause בִּי נָשָׂא וְנָא is added. This can hardly be understood in any other way than in the sense of בִּי נָשָׂא עָוֹן, viz. to take away sin or guilt, *i.e.* to forgive it (cf.

Gen. xviii. 24, 26, etc.). The explanation, "I will take away from them, *sc.* everything" (Hengstenberg), has no tenable support in ch. v. 14, because there the object to be supplied is contained in the context, and here this is not the case.

Ver. 7. "*And I will favour the house of Judah, and save them through Jehovah their God; and I will not save them through bow, and sword, and war, through horses and through horsemen.*" By a reference to the opposite lot awaiting Judah, all false trust in the mercy of God is taken away from the Israelites. From the fact that deliverance is promised to the kingdom of Judah through Jehovah its God, Israel is to learn that Jehovah is no longer its own God, but that He has dissolved His covenant with the idolatrous race. The expression, "through Jehovah their God," instead of the pronoun "through me" (as, for example, in Gen. xix. 24), is introduced with special emphasis, to show that Jehovah only extends His almighty help to those who acknowledge and worship Him as their God.<sup>1</sup> And what follows, viz. "I will not save them by bow," etc., also serves to sharpen the punishment with which the Israelites are threatened; for it not only implies that the Lord does not stand in need of weapons of war and military force, in order to help and save, but that these earthly resources, on which Israel relied (ch. x. 13), could afford no defence or deliverance from the enemies who would come upon it. *Milchâmâh*, "war," in connection with bow and sword, does not stand for weapons of war, but "embraces everything belonging to war—the skill of the commanders, the bravery of heroes, the strength of the army itself, and so forth" (Hengstenberg). Horses and horsemen are specially mentioned, because they constituted the main strength of an army at that time. Lastly, whilst the threat against Israel, and the promise made to Judah, refer primarily, as ch. ii. 1–3 clearly show, to the time immediately approaching, when the judgment was to burst upon the kingdom of the ten tribes, that is to say, to that attack upon Israel and Judah on

<sup>1</sup> "The antithesis is to be preserved here between false gods and Jehovah, who was the God of the house of Judah. For it is just as if the prophet had said: Ye do indeed put forward the name of God; but ye worship the devil, and not God. For ye have no part in Jehovah, *i.e.* in that God who is the Creator of heaven and earth. For He dwells in His temple; He has bound up His faith with David," etc.—CALVIN.

the part of the imperial power of Assyria, to which Israel succumbed, whilst Judah was miraculously delivered (2 Kings xix. ; Isa. xxxvii.) ; it has also a meaning which applies to all times, namely, that whoever forsakes the living God, will fall into destruction, and cannot reckon upon the mercy of God in the time of need.

Vers. 8, 9. "*And she weaned Unfavoured, and conceived, and bare a son. And He said, Call his name Not-my-people ; for ye are not my people, and I will not be yours.*" If weaning is mentioned not merely for the sake of varying the expression, but with a deliberate meaning, it certainly cannot indicate the continued patience of God with the rebellious nation, as Calvin supposes, but rather implies the uninterrupted succession of the calamities set forth by the names of the children. As soon as the Lord ceases to compassionate the rebellious tribes, the state of rejection ensues, so that they are no longer "my people," and Jehovah belongs to them no more. In the last clause, the words pass with emphasis into the second person, or direct address, "I will not be to you," *i.e.* will no more belong to you (cf. Ps. cxviii. 6 ; Ex. xix. 5 ; Ezek. xvi. 8). We need not supply *Elohim* here, and we may not weaken לֹא אֶהְיֶה לָכֶם into "no more help you, or come to your aid." For the fulfilment, see 2 Kings xvii. 18.

Vers. 10, 11 (Heb. Bib. ch. ii. 1-3). To the symbolical action, which depicts the judgment that falls blow after blow upon the ten tribes, issuing in the destruction of the kingdom, and the banishment of its inhabitants, there is now appended, quite abruptly, the saving announcement of the final restoration of those who turn to the Lord.<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 10 (Heb. Bib. ch. ii. 1). "*And the number of the sons*

<sup>1</sup> The division adopted in the Hebrew text, where these verses are separated from the preceding ones, and joined to the next verse, is opposed to the general arrangement of the prophetic proclamations, which always begin with reproving the sins, then describe the punishment or judgment, and close with the announcement of salvation. The division adopted by the LXX. and Vulg., and followed by Luther (and Eng. ver. : Tr.), in which these two verses form part of the first chapter, and the new chapter is made to commence with ver. 3 (of the Hebrew), on account of its similarity to ver. 4, is still more unsuitable, since this severs the close connection between the subject-matter of ver. 2 and that of ver. 3 in the most unnatural way.

of Israel will be as the sand of the sea, which is not measured and not counted; and it will come to pass at the place where men say to them, *Ye are not my people*, it will be said to them, *Sons of the living God.*" It might appear as though the promise made to the patriarchs, of the innumerable increase of Israel, were abolished by the rejection of the ten tribes of Israel predicted here. But this appearance, which might confirm the ungodly in their false security, is met by the proclamation of salvation, which we must connect by means of a "nevertheless" with the preceding announcement of punishment. The almost verbal agreement between this announcement of salvation and the patriarchal promises, more especially in Gen. xxii. 17 and xxxii. 13, does indeed naturally suggest the idea, that by the "sons of Israel," whose innumerable increase is here predicted, we are to understand all the descendants of Jacob or of Israel as a whole. But if we notice the second clause, according to which those who are called "not-my-people" will then be called "sons of the living God;" and still more, if we observe the distinction drawn between the sons of Israel and the sons of Judah in ver. 11, this idea is proved to be quite untenable, since the "sons of Israel" can only be the ten tribes. We must assume, therefore, that the prophet had in his mind only one portion of the entire nation, namely, the one with which alone he was here concerned, and that he proclaims that, even with regard to this, the promise in question will one day be fulfilled. In what way, is stated in the second clause. At the place where (בְּמָקוֹם אֲשֶׁר) does not mean "instead of" or "in the place of," as the Latin *loco* does; cf. Lev. iv. 24, 33; Jer. xxii. 12; Ezek. xxi. 35; Neh. iv. 14) men called them *Lō'-ammī*, they shall be called sons of the living God. This place must be either Palestine, where their rejection was declared by means of this name, or the land of exile, where this name became an actual truth. The correctness of the latter view, which is the one given in the Chaldee, is proved by ver. 11, where their coming up out of the land of exile is spoken of, from which it is evident that the change is to take place in exile. Jehovah is called *El chai*, the living God, in opposition to the idols which idolatrous Israel had made for itself; and "sons of the living God" expresses the thought, that Israel would come again into the right relation to the true God, and reach the goal of its divine calling. For the whole

nation was called and elevated into the position of sons of Jehovah, through its reception into the covenant with the Lord (compare Deut. xiv. 1, xxxii. 19, with Ex. iv. 22).

The restoration of Israel will be followed by its return to the Lord. Ver. 11. "*And the sons of Judah and the sons of Israel gather together, and appoint themselves one head, and come up out of the land; for great is the day of Jezreel.*" The gathering together, i.e. the union of Judah and Israel, presupposes that Judah will find itself in the same situation as Israel; that is to say, that it will also be rejected by the Lord. The object of the union is to appoint themselves *one* head, and go up out of the land. The words of the two clauses recal to mind the departure of the twelve tribes of Israel out of Egypt. The expression, to appoint themselves a head, which resembles Num. xiv. 4, where the rebellious congregation is about to appoint itself a head to return to Egypt, points back to Moses; and the phrase, "going up out of the land," is borrowed from Ex. i. 10, which also serves to explain יָצְאוּ with the definite article. The correctness of this view is placed beyond all doubt by ch. ii. 14, 15, where the restoration of rejected Israel is compared to leading it through the desert to Canaan; and a parallel is drawn between it and the leading up out of Egypt in the olden time. It is true that the banishment of the sons of Israel out of Canaan is not predicted *disertis verbis* in what precedes; but it followed as clearly as possible from the banishment into the land of their enemies, with which even Moses had threatened the people in the case of continued apostasy (Lev. xxvi. and Deut. xxviii.). Moses had, in fact, already described the banishment of rebellious Israel among the heathen in so many words, as carrying them back into Egypt (Deut. xxviii. 68), and had thereby intimated that Egypt was the type of the heathen world, in the midst of which Israel was to be scattered abroad. On the basis of these threatenings of the law, Hosea also threatens ungodly Ephraim with a return to Egypt in ch. viii. 13 and ch. ix. 3. And just as in these passages Egypt is a type of the heathen lands, into which Israel is to be driven away on account of its apostasy from the Lord; so, in the passage before us, Canaan, to which Israel is to be led up out of Egypt, is a type of the land of the Lord, and the guidance of them to Canaan a figurative representation of the reunion of

Israel with its God, and of its reinstatement in the full enjoyment of the blessings of salvation, which are shadowed forth in the fruits and productions of Canaan. (For further remarks, see vers. 14, 15.) Another point to be noticed is the use of the word 'echâd, one (single) head, *i.e.* one prince or king. The division of the nation into two kingdoms is to cease; and the house of Israel is to turn again to Jehovah, and to its king David (ch. iii. 5). The reason assigned for this promise, in the words "for great is (will be) the day of Jezreel," causes no little difficulty; and this cannot be removed by giving a different meaning to the name Jezreel, on the ground of vers. 24, 25, from that which it has in ch. i. 4, 5. The day of Jezreel can only be the day on which the might of Israel was broken in the valley of Jezreel, and the kingdom of the house of Israel was brought to an end (ch. i. 4). This day is called great, *i.e.* important, glorious, because of its effects and consequences in relation to Israel. The destruction of the might of the ten tribes, the cessation of their kingdom, and their expulsion into exile, form the turning-point, through which the conversion of the rebellious to the Lord, and their reunion with Judah, are rendered possible. The appellative meaning of יִזְרְעֵל, to which there was no allusion at all in ch. i. 4, 5, is still kept in the background to a great extent even here, and only so far slightly hinted at, that in the results which follow to the nation, from the judgment poured out upon Israel in Jezreel, the valley of Jezreel becomes a place in which God sows seed for the renovation of Israel.

To confirm the certainty of this most joyful turn of events, the promise closes with the summons in ch. ii. 1: "*Say ye to your brethren: My people; and to your sisters, Favoured.*" The prophet "sees the favoured nation of the Lord (in spirit) before him, and calls upon its members to accost one another joyfully with the new name which had been given to them by God" (Hengstenberg). The promise attaches itself in form to the names of the children of the prophet. As their names of ill omen proclaimed the judgment of rejection, so is the salvation which awaits the nation in the future announced to it here by a simple alteration of the names into their opposite through the omission of the נָא.

So far as the fulfilment of this prophecy is concerned, the

fact that the patriarchal promise of the innumerable multiplication of Israel is to be realized through the pardon and restoration of Israel, as the nation of the living God, shows clearly enough that we are not to look for this in the return of the ten tribes from captivity to Palestine, their native land. Even apart from the fact, that the historical books of the Bible (Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther) simply mention the return of a portion of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, along with the priests and Levites, under Zerubbabel and Ezra, and that the numbers of the ten tribes, who may have attached themselves to the Judæans on their return, or who returned to Galilee afterwards as years rolled by, formed but a very small fraction of the number that had been carried away (compare the remarks on 2 Kings xvii. 24); the attachment of these few to Judah could not properly be called a union of the sons of Israel and of the sons of Judah, and still less was it a fulfilment of the words, "They appoint themselves one head." As the union of Israel with Judah is to be effected through their gathering together under one head, under Jehovah their God and under David their king, this fulfilment falls within the Messianic times, and hitherto has only been realized in very small beginnings, which furnish a pledge of their complete fulfilment in the last times, when the hardening of Israel will cease, and all Israel be converted to Christ (Rom. xi. 25, 26). It is by no means difficult to bring the application, which is made of our prophecy in 1 Pet. ii. 10 and Rom. ix. 25, 26, into harmony with this. When Peter quotes the words of this prophecy in his first epistle, which nearly all modern commentators justly suppose to have been written to Gentile Christians, and when Paul quotes the very same words (ch. ii. 1, with ch. i. 10) as proofs of the calling of the Gentiles to be the children of God in Christ; this is not merely an application to the Gentiles of what is affirmed of Israel, or simply the clothing of their thoughts in Old Testament words, as Huther and Wiesinger suppose, but an argument based upon the fundamental thought of this prophecy. Through its apostasy from God, Israel had become like the Gentiles, and had fallen from the covenant of grace with the Lord. Consequently, the re-adoption of the Israelites as children of God was a practical proof that God had also adopted the Gentile world as His children. "Because



God had promised to adopt the children of Israel again, He must adopt the Gentiles also. Otherwise this resolution would rest upon mere caprice, which cannot be thought of in God" (Hengstenberg). Moreover, although membership in the nation of the Old Testament covenant rested primarily upon lineal descent, it was by no means exclusively confined to this; but, from the very first, Gentiles also were received into the citizenship of Israel and the congregation of Jehovah through the rite of circumcision, and could even participate in the covenant mercies, namely, in the passover as a covenant meal (Ex. xii. 14). There was in this an indirect practical prophecy of the eventual reception of the whole of the Gentile world into the kingdom of God, when it should attain through Christ to faith in the living God. Even through their adoption into the congregation of Jehovah by means of circumcision, believing Gentiles were exalted into children of Abraham, and received a share in the promises made to the fathers. And accordingly the innumerable multiplication of the children of Israel, predicted in ver. 10, is not to be restricted to the actual multiplication of the descendants of the Israelites now banished into exile; but the fulfilment of the promise must also include the incorporation of believing Gentiles into the congregation of the Lord (Isa. xlv. 5). This incorporation commenced with the preaching of the gospel among the Gentiles by the apostles; it has continued through all the centuries in which the church has been spreading in the world; and it will receive its final accomplishment when the fulness of the Gentiles shall enter into the kingdom of God. And as the number of the children of Israel is thus continually increased, this multiplication will be complete when the descendants of the children of Israel, who are still hardened in their hearts, shall turn to Jesus Christ as their Messiah and Redeemer (Rom. xi. 25, 26).

CHASTISEMENT OF IDOLATROUS ISRAEL, AND ITS CONVERSION  
AND FINAL RESTORATION.—CHAP. II. 2-23 (HEB. BIB.  
II. 4-25).

What the prophet announced in ch. i. 2-ii. 1, partly by a symbolical act, and partly also in a direct address, is carried out still further in the section before us. The close connection

between the contents of the two sections is formally indicated by the simple fact, that just as the first section closed with a summons to appropriate the predicted salvation, so the section before us commences with a call to conversion. As Rückert aptly says, "The significant pair give place to the thing signified; Israel itself appears as the adulterous woman." The Lord Himself will set bounds to her adulterous conduct, *i.e.* to the idolatry of the Israelites. By withdrawing the blessings which they have hitherto enjoyed, and which they fancy that they have received from their idols, He will lead the idolatrous nation to reflection and conversion, and pour the fulness of the blessings of His grace in the most copious measure upon those who have been humbled and improved by the punishment. The threatening and the announcement of punishment extend from ver. 2 to ver. 13; the proclamation of salvation commences with ver. 14, and reaches to the close of ver. 23. The threatening of punishment is divided into two strophes, viz. vers. 2-7 and vers. 8-13. In the first, the condemnation of their sinful conduct is the most prominent; in the second, the punishment is more fully developed.

Ver. 2. "*Reason with your mother, reason! for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband: that she put away her whoredom from her countenance, and her adultery from between her breasts.*" Jehovah is the speaker, and the command to get rid of the whoredom is addressed to the Israelites, who are represented as the children of the adulterous wife. The distinction between mother and children forms part of the figurative drapery of the thought; for, in fact, the mother had no existence apart from the children. The nation or kingdom, regarded as an ideal unity, is called the mother; whereas the several members of the nation are the children of this mother. The summons addressed to the children to contend or reason with this mother, that she may give up her adultery, presupposes that, although the nation regarded as a whole was sunken in idolatry, the individual members of it were not all equally slaves to it, so as to have lost their susceptibility for the divine warning, or the possibility of conversion. Not only had the Lord reserved to Himself seven thousand in Elijah's time who had not bowed their knees to Baal, but at all times there were many individuals in the midst of the corrupt mass,

who hearkened to the voice of the Lord and abhorred idolatry. The children had reason to plead, because the mother was no longer the wife of Jehovah, and Jehovah was no longer her husband, *i.e.* because she had dissolved her marriage with the Lord; and the inward, moral dissolution of the covenant of grace would be inevitably followed by the outward, actual dissolution, viz. by the rejection of the nation. It was therefore the duty of the better-minded of the nation to ward off the coming destruction, and do all they could to bring the adulterous wife to desist from her sins. The object of the pleading is introduced with יוֹסֵפֶר. The idolatry is described as whoredom and adultery. Whoredom becomes adultery when it is a wife who commits whoredom. Israel had entered into the covenant with Jehovah its God; and therefore its idolatry became a breach of the fidelity which it owed to its God, an act of apostasy from God, which was more culpable than the idolatry of the heathen. The whoredom is attributed to the face, the adultery to the breasts, because it is in these parts of the body that the want of chastity on the part of a woman is openly manifested, and in order to depict more plainly the boldness and shamelessness with which Israel practised idolatry.

The summons to repent is enforced by a reference to the punishment. Ver. 3. "*Lest I strip her naked, and put her as in the day of her birth, and set her like the desert, and make her like a barren land, and let her die with thirst.*" In the first hemistich the threat of punishment corresponds to the figurative representation of the adulteress; in the second it proceeds from the figure to the fact. In the marriage referred to, the husband had redeemed the wife out of the deepest misery, to unite himself with her. Compare Ezek. xvi. 4 sqq., where the nation is represented as a naked child covered with filth, which the Lord took to Himself, covering its nakedness with beautiful clothes and costly ornaments, and entering into covenant with it. These gifts, with which the Lord also presented and adorned His wife during the marriage, He would now take away from the apostate wife, and put her once more into a state of nakedness. The day of the wife's birth is the time of Israel's oppression and bondage in Egypt, when it was given up in helplessness to its oppressors. The deliverance out of this bondage was the time of the divine courtship; and the

conclusion of the covenant with the nation that had been brought out of Egypt, the time of the marriage. The words, "I set (make) her like the desert," are to be understood as referring not to the land of Israel, which was to be laid waste, but to the nation itself, which was to become like the desert, *i.e.* to be brought into a state in which it would be destitute of the food that is indispensable to the maintenance of life. The dry land is a land without water, in which men perish from thirst. There is hardly any need to say that these words do not refer to the sojourn of Israel in the Arabian desert; for there the Lord fed His people with manna from heaven, and gave them water to drink out of the rock.

Ver. 4. "*And I will not have compassion upon her children, for they are children of whoredom.*" This verse is also dependent, so far as the meaning is concerned, upon the *pen* (lest) in ver. 3; but in form it constitutes an independent sentence. *B'ne z'nūnīm* (sons of whoredoms) refers back to *yaldē z'nūnīm* in ch. i. 2. The children are the members of the nation, and are called "sons of whoredom," not merely on account of their origin as begotten in whoredom, but also because they inherit the nature and conduct of their mother. The fact that the children are specially mentioned after and along with the mother, when in reality mother and children are one, serves to give greater keenness to the threat, and guards against that carnal security, in which individuals imagine that, inasmuch as they are free from the sin and guilt of the nation as a whole, they will also be exempted from the threatened punishment.

Ver. 5. "*For their mother hath committed whoredom; she that bare them hath practised shame: for she said, I will go after my lovers, who give (me) my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, my oil and my drink.*" By *ki* (for) and the suffixes attached to *'immām* (their mother) and *hōrāthām* (that bare them), the first clauses are indeed introduced as though simply explanatory and confirmatory of the last clause of ver. 4; but if we look at the train of thought generally, it is obvious that ver. 5 is not merely intended to explain the expression sons of whoredom, but to explain and vindicate the main thought, *viz.* that the children of whoredom, *i.e.* the idolatrous Israelites, will find no mercy. Now, as the mother and children are identical, if we trace back the figurative drapery to its actual basis, the

punishment with which the children are threatened applies to the mother also; and the description of the mother's whoredom serves also to explain the reason for the punishment with which the mother is threatened in ver. 3. And this also accounts for the fact that, in the threat which follows in ver. 6, "I hedge up thy way," the mother herself is again directly addressed. The *hiphil hōbhîsh*, which is traceable to *yābhēsh*, so far as the form is concerned, but derives its meaning from בָּשָׁם, is not used here in its ordinary sense of being put to shame, but in the transitive sense of practising shame, analogous to the transitive meaning "to shame," which we find in 2 Sam. xix. 5. To explain this thought, the coquetting with idols is more minutely described in the second hemistich. The delusive idea expressed by the wife (אִמָּה, in the *perfect*, indicates speaking or thinking which stretches from the past into the present), viz. that the idols give her food (bread and water), clothing (wool and flax), and the delicacies of life (oil and drink, i.e. wine and must and strong drink), that is to say, "everything that conduces to luxury and superfluity," which we also find expressed in Jer. xlv. 17, 18, arose from the sight of the heathen nations round about, who were rich and mighty, and attributed this to their gods. It is impossible, however, that such a thought can ever occur, except in cases where the heart is already estranged from the living God. For so long as a man continues in undisturbed vital fellowship with God, "he sees with the eye of faith the hand in the clouds, from which he receives all, by which he is guided, and on which everything, even that which has apparently the most independence and strength, entirely depends" (Hengstenberg).

Ver. 6. "*Therefore* (because the woman says this), *behold, thus will I hedge up thy way with thorns, and wall up a wall, and she shall not find her paths.*" The hedging up of the way, strengthened by the similar figure of the building of a wall to cut off the way, denotes her transportation into a situation in which she could no longer continue her adultery with the idols. The reference is to distress and tribulation (compare ch. v. 15 with Deut. iv. 30, Job iii. 23, xix. 8, Lam. iii. 7), especially the distress and anguish of exile, in which, although Israel was in the midst of idolatrous nations, and therefore had even more outward opportunity to practise idolatry, it learned the worth-

lessness of all trust in idols, and their utter inability to help, and was thus impelled to reflect and turn to the Lord, who smites and heals (ch. vi. 1).

This thought is carried out still further in ver. 7: "*And she will pursue her lovers, and not overtake them; and seek them, and not find them: and will say, I will go and return to my first husband, for it was better with me then than now.*" Distress at first increases their zeal in idolatry, but it soon brings them to see that the idols afford no help. The failure to reach or find the lovers, who are sought with zeal (*riddēph, piel* in an intensive sense, to pursue eagerly), denotes the failure to secure what is sought from them, viz. the anticipated deliverance from the calamity, which the living God has sent as a punishment. This sad experience awakens the desire to return to the faithful covenant God, and the acknowledgment that prosperity and all good things are to be found in vital fellowship with Him.

The thought that God will fill the idolatrous nation with disgust at its coquetry with strange gods, by taking away all its possessions, and thus putting to shame its delusive fancy that the possessions which it enjoyed really came from the idols, is still further expanded in the second strophe, commencing with the eighth verse. Ver. 8. "*And she knows not that I have given her the corn, and the must, and the oil, and have multiplied silver to her, and gold, which they have used for Baal.*" Corn, must, and oil are specified with the definite article as being the fruits of the land, which Israel received from year to year. These possessions were the foundation of the nation's wealth, through which gold and silver were multiplied. Ignorance of the fact that Jehovah was the giver of these blessings, was a sin. That Jehovah had given the land to His people, was impressed upon the minds of the people for all time, together with the recollection of the mighty acts of the Lord, by the manner in which Israel had been put in possession of Canaan; and not only had Moses again and again reminded the Israelites most solemnly that it was He who gave rain to the land, and multiplied and blessed its fruitfulness and its fruits (compare, for example, Deut. vii. 13, xi. 14, 15), but this was also perpetually called to their remembrance by the law concerning the offering of the first-fruits at the feasts. The words '*āsū labba'al*' are to be

taken as a relative clause without *'asher*, though not in the sense of "which they have made into Baal," *i.e.* out of which they have made Baal-images (Chald., Rabb., Hitzig, Ewald, and others); for even though  $\text{בָּאָל־עֹשֶׂה}$  occurs in this sense in Isa. xlv. 17, the article, which is wanting in Isaiah, and also in Gen. xii. 2 and Ex. xxxii. 10, precludes such an explanation here, apart from the fact that *habba'al* cannot stand by itself for a statue of Baal. Here  $\text{בָּאָל־עֹשֶׂה}$  has rather the general meaning "apply to anything," just as in 2 Chron. xxiv. 7, where it occurs in a perfectly similar train of thought. This use of the word may be obtained from the meaning "to prepare for anything," whereas the meaning "to offer," which Gesenius adopts ("which they have offered to Baal"), is untenable, since  $\text{עֹשֶׂה}$  simply denotes the preparation of the sacrifice for the altar, which is out of the question in the case of silver and gold. They had applied their gold and silver to Baal, however, not merely by using them for the preparation of idols, but by employing them in the maintenance and extension of the worship of Baal, or even by regarding them as gifts of Baal, and thus confirming themselves in the zealous worship of that god. By *habba'al* we are not simply to understand the Canaanitish or Phœnician Baal in the stricter sense of the word, whose worship Jehu had exterminated from Israel, though not entirely, as is evident from the allusion to an *Asherah* in Samaria in the reign of Jehoahaz (2 Kings xiii. 6); but *Baal* is a general expression for all idols, including the golden calves, which are called other gods in 1 Kings xiv. 9, and compared to actual idols.

Ver. 9. "*Therefore will I take back my corn at its time, and my must at its season, and tear away my wool and my flax for the covering of her nakedness.*" Because Israel had not regarded the blessings it received as gifts of its God, and used them for His glory, the Lord would take them away from it.  $\text{אֶשְׁבֵּי וְלִקְחָתִי}$  are to be connected, so that  $\text{אֶשְׁבֵּי}$  has the force of an adverb, not however in the sense of simple repetition, as it usually does, but with the idea of return, as in Jer. xii. 15, *viz.* to take again = to take back. "My corn," etc., is the corn, the must, which I have given. "At its time," *i.e.* at the time when men expect corn, new wine, etc., *viz.* at the time of harvest, when men feel quite sure of receiving or possessing it. If God suddenly takes away the gifts then, not only is the loss more painfully

felt, but regarded as a punishment far more than when they have been prepared beforehand for a bad harvest by the failure of the crop. Through the manner in which God takes the fruits of the land away from the people, He designs to show them that He, and not Baal, is the giver and the taker also. The words "to cover her nakedness" are not dependent upon *הַצִּלָּתָהּ*, but belong to *צִמְרֵי וַיִּשְׁתִּי*, and are simply a more concise mode of saying, "Such serve, or are meant, to cover her nakedness." They serve to sharpen the threat, by intimating that if God withdraw His gifts, the nation will be left in utter penury and ignominious nakedness (*'ervâh, pudendum*).

Ver. 10. "*And now will I uncover her shame before her lovers, and no one shall tear her out of my hand.*" The *ἀπ. λεγ. נִבְלָיוּ*, lit. a withered state, from *נָבַל*, to be withered or faded, probably denotes, as Hengstenberg says, *corpus multa stupra passum*, and is rendered freely in the LXX. by *ἀκαθαρσία*. "Before the eyes of the lovers," i.e. not so that they shall be obliged to look at it, without being able to avoid it, but so that the woman shall become even to them an object of abhorrence, from which they will turn away (comp. Nahum iii. 5; Jer. xiii. 26). In this concrete form the general truth is expressed, that "whoever forsakes God for the world, will be put to shame by God before the world itself; and that all the more, the nearer it stood to Him before" (Hengstenberg). By the addition of the words "no one," etc., all hope is cut off that the threatened punishment can be averted (cf. ch. v. 14).

This punishment is more minutely defined in vers. 11-13, in which the figurative drapery is thrown into the background by the actual fact. Ver. 11. "*And I make all her joy keep holiday (i.e. cease), her feast, and her new moon, and her sabbath, and all her festive time.*" The feast days and festive times were days of joy, in which Israel was to rejoice before the Lord its God. To bring into prominence this character of the feasts, *כָּל-מְשֻׁשָׁהּ*, "all her joy," is placed first, and the different festivals are mentioned afterwards. *Châg* stands for the three principal festivals of the year, the Passover, Pentecost, and the feast of Tabernacles, which had the character of *châg*, i.e. of feasts of joy *par excellence*, as being days of commemoration of the great acts of mercy which the Lord performed on behalf of His people. Then came the day of the new moon every



month, and the Sabbath every week. Finally, these feasts are all summed up in בָּל-מוֹעֲדָה; for מוֹעֲדִים, מוֹעֵד is the general expression for all festive seasons and festive days (Lev. xxiii. 2, 4). As a parallel, so far as the facts are concerned, comp. Amos viii. 10, Jer. vii. 34, and Lam. i. 4, v. 15.

The Lord will put an end to the festive rejoicing, by taking away the fruits of the land, which rejoice man's heart. Ver. 12. "*And I lay waste her vine and her fig-tree, of which she said, They are lovers' wages to me, which my lovers gave me; and I make them a forest, and the beasts of the field devour them.*" Vine and fig-tree, the choicest productions of the land of Canaan, are mentioned as the representatives of the rich means of sustenance with which the Lord had blessed His people (cf. 1 Kings v. 5; Joel ii. 22, etc.). The devastation of both of these denotes the withdrawal of the possessions and enjoyments of life (cf. Jer. v. 17; Joel i. 7, 12), because Israel regarded them as a present from its idols. אֶתְנָה, softened down from אֶתֶּנָּה (ch. ix. 1), like שְׂרִיָּה, in Job xli. 18, from שָׂרָן (1 Kings xxii. 34; cf. Ewald, § 163, *h*), signifies the wages of prostitution (Deut. xxiii. 19). The derivation is disputed and uncertain, since the verb תָּנָה cannot be shown to have been used either in Hebrew or the other Semitic dialects in the sense of *dedi*, *dona porrexit* (Ges.), and the word cannot be traced to תָּנָה, to extend; whilst, on the other hand, the verb הִתְנָה, תָּנָה (ch. viii. 9, 10) is most probably a denominative of אֶתְנָה. Consequently, Hengstenberg supposes it to be a bad word formed out of the question put by the prostitute, מַה תֶּנָּה לִי, and the answer given by the man, אֶתְנָה לָּךְ (Gen. xxxviii. 16, 18), and used in the language of the brothel in connection with an evil deed. The vineyards and fig-orchards, so carefully hedged about and cultivated, are to be turned into a forest, *i.e.* to be deprived of their hedges and cultivation, so that the wild beasts may be able to devour them. The suffixes attached to שְׂמִיָּהִים and אֶבְרִיתִים refer to גֵּפֶן וְתֵמָרָה (the vine and fig-tree), and not merely to the fruit. Comp. Isa. vii. 23 sqq. and Mic. iii. 12, where a similar figure is used to denote the complete devastation of the land.

In this way will the Lord take away from the people their festivals of joy. Ver. 13. "*And I visit upon her the days of the Baals, to which she burned incense, and adorned herself with her ring and her jewels, and went after her lovers; and she hath*

*forgotten me, is the word of Jehovah."* The days of the Baals are the sacred days and festive seasons mentioned in ver. 13, which Israel ought to have sanctified and kept to the Lord its God, but which it celebrated in honour of the Baals, through its fall into idolatry. There is no ground for thinking of special feast-days dedicated to Baal, in addition to the feasts of Jehovah prescribed by the law. Just as Israel had changed Jehovah into Baal, so had it also turned the feast-days of Jehovah into festive days of the Baals, and on those days had burned incense, i.e. offered sacrifice to the Baals (cf. ch. iv. 13; 2 Kings xvii. 11). In ver. 8 we find only *הַבַּעַל* mentioned, but here *הַבָּעִלִּים* in the plural, because Baal was worshipped under different modifications, from which *B'âlim* came to be used in the general sense of the various idols of the Canaanites (cf. Judg. ii. 11; 1 Kings xviii. 18, etc.). In the second hemistich this spiritual coquetry with the idols is depicted under the figure of the outward coquetry of a woman, who resorts to all kinds of outward ornaments in order to excite the admiration of her lovers (as in Jer. iv. 30 and Ezek. xxiii. 40 sqq.). There is no ground for thinking of the wearing of nose-rings and ornaments in honour of the idols. The antithesis to this adorning of themselves is "forgetting Jehovah," in which the sin is brought out in its true shape. On *נָסַח יְהוָה*, see Delitzsch on Isa. i. 24.

In ver. 14 the promise is introduced quite as abruptly as in ver. 1, that the Lord will lead back the rebellious nation step by step to conversion and reunion with Himself, the righteous God. In two strophes we have first the promise of their conversion (vers. 14-17), and secondly, the assurance of the renewal of the covenant mercies (vers. 18-23). Vers. 14, 15. "*Therefore, behold, I allure her, and lead her into the desert, and speak to her heart. And I give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor (of tribulation) for the door of hope; and she answers thither, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.*" *לָכֵן*, therefore (not *utique, profecto*, but, nevertheless, which *lâkhên* never means), is co-ordinate with the *lâkhên* in vers. 6 and 9, and is connected primarily with the last clause of ver. 13. "Because the wife has forgotten God, He calls Himself to her remembrance again, first of all by punishment (vers. 6 and 9); then, when this has answered its purpose, and after she has said, I

will go and return (ver. 7), by the manifestations of His love" (Hengstenberg). That the first clause of ver. 14 does not refer to the flight of the people out of Canaan into the desert, for the purpose of escaping from their foes, as Hitzig supposes, is sufficiently obvious to need no special proof. The alluring of the nation into the desert to lead it thence to Canaan, presupposes that rejection from the inheritance given to it by the Lord (viz. Canaan), which Israel had brought upon itself through its apostasy. This rejection is represented as an expulsion from Canaan to Egypt, the land of bondage, out of which Jehovah had redeemed it in the olden time. פָּהַל, in the *piel* to persuade, to decoy by words; here *sensu bono*, to allure by friendly words. The desert into which the Lord will lead His people cannot be any other than the desert of Arabia, through which the road from Egypt to Canaan passes. Leading into this desert is not a punishment, but a redemption out of bondage. The people are not to remain in the desert, but to be enticed and led through it to Canaan, the land of vineyards. The description is typical throughout. What took place in the olden time is to be repeated, in all that is essential, in the time to come. Egypt, the Arabian desert, and Canaan are types. Egypt is a type of the land of captivity, in which Israel had been oppressed in its fathers by the heathen power of the world. The Arabian desert, as the intervening stage between Egypt and Canaan, is introduced here, in accordance with the importance which attached to the march of Israel through this desert under the guidance of Moses, as a period or state of probation and trial, as described in Deut. viii. 2-6, in which the Lord humbled His people, training it on the one hand by want and privation to the knowledge of its need of help, and on the other hand by miraculous deliverance in the time of need (*e.g.* the manna, the stream of water, and the preservation of their clothing) to trust to His omnipotence, that He might awaken within it a heartfelt love to the fulfilment of His commandments and a faithful attachment to Himself. Canaan, the land promised to the fathers as an everlasting possession, with its costly productions, is a type of the inheritance bestowed by the Lord upon His church, and of blessedness in the enjoyment of the gifts of the Lord which refresh both body and soul. דִּבֶּר עַל לֵב, to speak to the heart, as applied to loving,

comforting words (Gen. xxxiv. 3, l. 21, etc.), is not to be restricted to the comforting addresses of the prophets, but denotes a comforting by action, by manifestations of love, by which her grief is mitigated, and the broken heart is healed. The same love is shown in the renewed gifts of the possessions of which the unfaithful nation had been deprived. In this way we obtain a close link of connection for ver. 15. By מִשָּׁם . . . יִתְּנִי, "I give from thence," i.e. from the desert onwards, the thought is expressed, that on entering the promised land Israel would be put into immediate possession and enjoyment of its rich blessings. Manger has correctly explained מִשָּׁם as meaning "as soon as it shall have left this desert," or better still, "as soon as it shall have reached the border." "Its vineyards" are the vineyards which it formerly possessed, and which rightfully belonged to the faithful wife, though they had been withdrawn from the unfaithful (ver. 12). The valley of *Achor*, which was situated to the north of Gilgal and Jericho (see at Josh. vii. 26), is mentioned by the prophet, not because of its situation on the border of Palestine, nor on account of its fruitfulness, of which nothing is known, but with an evident allusion to the occurrence described in Josh. vii., from which it obtained its name of '*Akhôr*, *Troubling*'. This is obvious from the declaration that this valley shall become a door of hope. Through the sin of Achan, who took some of the spoil of Jericho which had been devoted by the ban to the Lord, Israel had fallen under the ban, so that the Lord withdrew His help, and the army that marched against Ai was defeated. But in answer to the prayer of Joshua and the elders, God showed to Joshua not only the cause of the calamity which had befallen the whole nation, but the means of escaping from the ban and recovering the lost favour of God. Through the name *Achor* this valley became a memorial, how the Lord restores His favour to the church after the expiation of the guilt by the punishment of the transgressor. And this divine mode of procedure will be repeated in all its essential characteristics. The Lord will make the valley of troubling a door of hope, i.e. He will so expiate the sins of His church, and cover them with His grace, that the covenant of fellowship with Him will no more be rent asunder by them; or He will so display His grace to the sinners, that compassion

will manifest itself even in wrath, and through judgment and mercy the pardoned sinners will be more and more firmly and inwardly united to Him. And the church will respond to this movement on the part of the love of God, which reveals itself in justice and mercy. It will answer to the place, whence the Lord comes to meet it with the fulness of His saving blessings. עֲנֵה does not mean "to sing," but "to answer;" and שָׁמָּה, pointing back to מִצֵּיפֶיךָ, must not be regarded as equivalent to עֲנֵה. As the comforting address of the Lord is a *sermo realis*, so the answer of the church is a practical response of grateful acknowledgment and acceptance of the manifestations of divine love, just as was the case in the days of the nation's youth, *i.e.* in the time when it was led up from Egypt to Canaan. Israel then answered the Lord, after its redemption from Egypt, by the song of praise and thanksgiving at the Red Sea (Ex. xv.), and by its willingness to conclude the covenant with the Lord at Sinai, and to keep His commandments (Ex. xxiv.).

Ver. 16. "*And it comes to pass in that day, is the saying of Jehovah, thou wilt call, My husband; and thou wilt no more call to me, My Baal.*" The church will then enter once more into the right relation to its God. This thought is expressed thus, that the wife will no more call her husband Baal, but husband. *Ba'al* is not to be taken as an appellative in the sense of master, as distinguished from *'ish*, man, *i.e.* husband, for *ba'al* does not mean master or lord, but owner, possessor; and whenever it is applied to a husband in an appellative sense, it is used quite promiscuously with *'ish* (*e.g.* 2 Sam. xi. 26, Gen. xx. 3). Moreover, the context in this instance, especially the *B'âlim* in ver. 19, decidedly requires that *Ba'al* should be taken as a proper name. Calling or naming is a designation of the nature or the true relation of a person or thing. The church calls God her husband, when she stands in the right relation to Him; when she acknowledges, reveres, and loves Him, as He has revealed Himself, *i.e.* as the only true God. On the other hand, she calls Him Baal, when she places the true God on the level of the Baals, either by worshipping other gods along with Jehovah, or by obliterating the essential distinction between Jehovah and the Baals, confounding together the worship of God and idolatrous worship, the Jehovah-religion and heathenism.

Ver. 17. "*And I put away the names of the Baals out of her mouth, and they are no more remembered by their name.*" As soon as the nation ceases to call Jehovah Baal, the custom of taking the names of the Baals into its mouth ceases of itself. And when this also is mentioned here as the work of God, the thought is thereby expressed, that the abolition of polytheism and mixed religion is a work of that divine grace which renews the heart, and fills with such abhorrence of the coarser or more refined forms of idolatry, that men no longer dare to take the names of the idols into their lips. This divine promise rests upon the command in Ex. xxiii. 13, "Ye shall make no mention of the names of other gods," and is repeated almost word for word in Zech. xiii. 2.

With the complete abolition of idolatry and false religion, the church of the Lord will attain to the enjoyment of undisturbed peace. Ver. 18. "*And I make a covenant for them in that day with the beasts of the field, and the fowls of heaven, and the moving creatures of the earth: and I break in pieces bow, and sword, and battle out of the land, and cause them to dwell securely.*" God makes a covenant with the beasts, when He imposes the obligation upon them to hurt men no more. "*For them:*" *lâhem* is a *dat. comm.*, for the good of the favoured ones. The three classes of beasts that are dangerous to men, are mentioned here, as in Gen. ix. 2. "Beasts of the field," as distinguished from the same domestic animals (*b'hēmâh*), are beasts that live in freedom in the fields, either wild beasts, or game that devours or injures the fruits of the field. By the "fowls of heaven," we are to understand chiefly the birds of prey. *Remes* does not mean reptiles, but that which is active, the smaller animals of the land which move about with velocity. The breaking in pieces of the weapons of war and of battle out of the land, is a pregnant expression for the extinction not only of the instruments of war, but also of war itself, and their extermination from the land. *Milchâmâh*, war, is connected with *shâbhar per zeugma*. This promise rests upon Lev. xxvi. 3 sqq., and is still further expanded in Ezek. xxxiv. 25 sqq. (Compare the parallels in Isa. ii. 4, xi., xxxv. 9, and Zech. ix. 10.)

Ver. 19. "*And I betroth thee to myself for ever; and I betroth thee to myself in righteousness, and judgment, and in*

*grace and pity.* Ver. 20. *And I betroth thee to myself in faithfulness; and thou acknowledgedst Jehovah.* לוֹ אֲרִישׁ לוֹ, to betroth to one's self, to woo, is only applied to the wooing of a maiden, not to the restoration of a wife who has been divorced, and is generally distinguished from the taking of a wife (Deut. xx. 7). לוֹ אֲרִישׁ לוֹ therefore points, as Calvin observes, to an entirely new marriage. "It was indeed great grace for the unfaithful wife to be taken back again. She might in justice have been put away for ever. The only valid ground for divorce was there, since she had lived for years in adultery. But the grace of God goes further still. The past is not only forgiven, but it is also forgotten" (Hengstenberg). The Lord will now make a new covenant of marriage with His church, such as is made with a spotless virgin. This new and altogether unexpected grace He now directly announces to her: "I betroth thee to myself;" and repeats this promise three times in ever fresh terms, expressive of the indissoluble character of the new relation. This is involved in לְעוֹלָם, "for ever," whereas the former covenant had been broken and dissolved by the wife's own guilt. In the clauses which follow, we have a description of the attributes which God would thereby unfold in order to render the covenant indissoluble. These are, (1) righteousness and judgment; (2) grace and compassion; (3) faithfulness. *Tsedeq* = *ts'dâqâh* and *mishpât* are frequently connected. *Tsedeq*, "being right," denotes subjective righteousness as an attribute of God or man; and *mishpât*, objective right, whether in its judicial execution as judgment, or in its existence in actual fact. God betroths His church to Himself in righteousness and judgment, not by doing her justice, and faithfully fulfilling the obligations which He undertook at the conclusion of the covenant (Hengstenberg), but by purifying her, through the medium of just judgment, from all the unholiness and ungodliness that adhere to her still (Isa. i. 27), that He may wipe out everything that can injure the covenant on the part of the church. But with the existing sinfulness of human nature, justice and judgment will not suffice to secure the lasting continuance of the covenant; and therefore God also promises to show mercy and compassion. But as even the love and compassion of God have their limits, the Lord still further adds, "in faithfulness or constancy," and thereby gives the promise that He will no more

withdraw His mercy from her. בְּאַמִּינָהּ is also to be understood of the faithfulness of God, as in Ps. lxxxix. 25, not of that of man (Hengstenberg). This is required by the parallelism of the sentences. In the faithfulness of God the church has a certain pledge, that the covenant founded upon righteousness and judgment, mercy and compassion, will stand for ever. The consequence of this union is, that the church knows Jehovah. This knowledge is "real." "He who knows God in this way, cannot fail to love Him, and be faithful to Him" (Hengstenberg); for out of this covenant there flows unconquerable salvation.

Vers. 21, 22. "*And it comes to pass in that day, I will hear, is the word of Jehovah; I will hear heaven, and it hears the earth. And the earth will hear the corn, and the new wine, and the oil; and they will hear Jezreel (God sows).*" God will hear all the prayers that ascend to Him from His church (the first אָמֵנָה is to be taken absolutely; compare the parallel in Isa. lviii. 9), and cause all the blessings of heaven and earth to flow down to His favoured people. By a prosopopeia, the prophet represents the heaven as praying to God, to allow it to give to the earth that which is requisite to ensure its fertility; whereupon the heaven fulfils the desires of the earth, and the earth yields its produce to the nation.<sup>1</sup> In this way the thought is embodied, that all things in heaven and on earth depend on God; "so that without His bidding not a drop of rain falls from heaven, and the earth produces no germ, and consequently all nature would at length be barren, unless He gave it fertility by His blessing" (Calvin). The promise rests upon Deut. xxviii. 12, and forms the antithesis to the threat in Lev. xxvi. 19 and Deut. xxviii. 23, 24, that God will make the heavens as brass, and the earth as iron, to those who despise His name. In the last clause the prophecy returns to its starting-point with the words, "Hear Jezreel." The blessing which flows down from heaven to earth flows to *Jezreel*, the nation which "God sows." The name *Jezreel*, which symbolizes the judgment about to burst upon the kingdom of Israel, according to the historical signification

<sup>1</sup> As Umbreit observes, "It is as though we heard the exalted harmonies of the connected powers of creation, sending forth their notes as they are sustained and moved by the eternal key-note of the creative and moulding Spirit."



of the name in ch. i. 4, 11, is used here in the primary sense of the word, to denote the nation as pardoned and reunited to its God.

This is evident from the explanation given in ver. 23: "*And I sow her for myself in the land, and favour Unfavoured, and say to Not-my-people, Thou art my people; and it says to me, My God.*" זָרַע does not mean "to strew," or scatter (not even in Zech. x. 9; cf. Koehler on the passage), but simply "to sow." The feminine suffix to זָרַע־הָאֵשֶׁת refers, *ad sensum*, to the wife whom God has betrothed to Himself for ever, i.e. to the favoured church of Israel, which is now to become a true *Jezreel*, as a rich sowing on the part of God. With this turn in the guidance of Israel, the ominous names of the other children of the prophet's marriage will also be changed into their opposite, to show that mercy and the restoration of vital fellowship with the Lord will now take the place of judgment, and of the rejection of the idolatrous nation. With regard to the fulfilment of the promise, the remarks made upon this point at ch. i. 11 and ii. 1 (pp. 49, 50), are applicable here, since this section is simply a further expansion of the preceding one.

#### THE ADULTERESS AND HER FRESH MARRIAGE.—CHAP. III.

"The significant pair are introduced again, but with a fresh application." In a second symbolical marriage, the prophet sets forth the faithful, but for that very reason chastising and reforming, love of the Lord to rebellious and adulterous Israel. By the command of God he takes a wife, who lives in continued adultery, notwithstanding his faithful love, and places her in a position in which she is obliged to renounce her lovers, that he may thus lead her to return. Vers. 1-3 contain the symbolical action; vers. 4, 5 the explanation, with an announcement of the reformation which this proceeding is intended to effect.

Ver. 1. "*And Jehovah said to me, Go again, and love a woman beloved of her companion, and committing adultery, as Jehovah loveth the children of Israel, and they turn to other gods, and love raisin-cakes.*" The purely symbolical character of this divine command is evident from the nature of the command itself, but more especially from the peculiar epithet applied to the wife. עֵדִי is not to be connected with אִמָּרֶת, in opposition to

the accents, but belongs to  $\text{רֵךְ}$ , and is placed first for the sake of emphasis. Loving the woman, as the carrying out of the divine command in ver. 2 clearly shows, is in fact equivalent to taking a wife; and 'āhabh is chosen instead of *lāqach*, simply for the purpose of indicating at the very outset the nature of the union enjoined upon the prophet. The woman is characterized as beloved of her companion (friend), and committing adultery.  $\text{רֵךְ}$  denotes a friend or companion, with whom one cherishes intercourse and fellowship, never a fellow-creature generally, but simply the fellow-creature with whom one lives in the closest intimacy (Ex. xx. 17, 18, xxii. 25, etc.). The  $\text{רֵךְ}$  (companion) of a woman, who loves her, can only be her husband or paramour. The word is undoubtedly used in Jer. iii. 1, 20, and Song of Sol. v. 16, with reference to a husband, but never of a fornicator or adulterous paramour. And the second epithet employed here, viz. "committing adultery," which forms an unmistakable antithesis to  $\text{אָהַבְתָּ רַע}$ , requires that it should be understood in this instance as signifying a husband; for a woman only becomes an adulteress when she is unfaithful to her loving husband, and goes with other men, but not when she gives up her beloved paramour to live with her husband only. If the epithets referred to the love shown by a paramour, by which the woman had annulled the marriage, this would necessarily have been expressed by the perfect or pluperfect. By the participles  $\text{אָהַבְתָּ}$  and  $\text{מִתְאַהֶבֶת}$ , the love of the companion and the adultery of the wife are supposed to be continued and contemporaneous with the love which the prophet is to manifest towards the woman. This overthrows the assertion made by Kurtz, that we have before us a woman who was already married at the time when the prophet was commanded to love her, as at variance with the grammatical construction, and changing the participle into the pluperfect. For, during the time that the prophet loved the wife he had taken, the  $\text{רֵךְ}$  who displayed his love to her could only be her husband, i.e. the prophet himself, towards whom she stood in the closest intimacy, founded upon love, i.e. in the relation of marriage. The correctness of this view, that the  $\text{רֵךְ}$  is the prophet as husband, is put beyond all possibility of doubt by the explanation of the divine command which follows. As Jehovah loves the sons of Israel, although or whilst they turn to other gods, i.e. break

their marriage with Jehovah; so is the prophet to love the woman who commits adultery, or will commit adultery, notwithstanding his love, since the adultery could only take place when the prophet had shown to the woman the love commanded, *i.e.* had connected himself with her by marriage. The peculiar epithet applied to the woman can only be explained from the fact intended to be set forth by the symbolical act itself, and, as we have already shown at p. 31, is irreconcilable with the assumption that the command of God refers to a marriage to be really and outwardly consummated. The words "וְאֶהְיֶה לָהּ כְּאִשָּׁה" recal Deut. vii. 8, and "וְהָיָה פָּנִים וְנִי" Deut. xxxi. 18. The last clause, "and loving grape-cakes," does not apply to the idols, who would be thereby represented either as lovers of grape-cakes, or as those to whom grape-cakes were offered (Hitzig), but is a continuation of פָּנִים, indicating the reason why Israel turned to other gods. Grape or raisin cakes (on 'āshīshāh, see at 2 Sam. vi. 19) are delicacies, figuratively representing that idolatrous worship which appeals to the senses, and gratifies the carnal impulses and desires. Compare Job xx. 12, where sin is figuratively described as food which is sweet as new honey in the mouth, but turns into the gall of asps in the belly. Loving grape-cakes is equivalent to indulging in sensuality. Because Israel loves this, it turns to other gods. "The solemn and strict religion of Jehovah is plain but wholesome food; whereas idolatry is relaxing food, which is only sought after by epicures and men of depraved tastes" (Hengstenberg).

Ver. 2. "*And I acquired her for myself for fifteen pieces of silver, and a homer of barley, and a lethech of barley.*" אֶהְיֶה, with *dagesh lene* or *dirimens* (Ewald, § 28, b), from *kārāh*, to dig, to procure by digging, then generally to acquire (see at Deut. ii. 6), or obtain by trading (Job vi. 27, xl. 30). Fifteen *keseph* are fifteen shekels of silver; the word *shekel* being frequently omitted in statements as to amount (compare Ges. § 120, 4, Anm. 2). According to Ezek. xlv. 11, the *homer* contained ten baths or ephahs, and a *lethech* (ἡμικοπός, LXX.) was a half homer. Consequently the prophet gave fifteen shekels of silver and fifteen ephahs of barley; and it is a very natural supposition, especially if we refer to 2 Kings vii. 1, xvi. 18, that at that time an ephah of barley was worth

a shekel, in which case the whole price would just amount to the sum for which, according to Ex. xxi. 32, it was possible to purchase a slave, and was paid half in money and half in barley. The reason for the latter it is impossible to determine with certainty. The price generally, for which the prophet obtained the wife, was probably intended to indicate the servile condition out of which Jehovah purchased Israel to be His people; and the circumstance that the prophet gave no more for the wife than the amount at which a slave could be obtained, according to Ex. xxi. 32 and Zech. xi. 12, and that this amount was not even paid in money, but half of it in barley—a kind of food so generally despised throughout antiquity (*vile hordeum*; see at Num. v. 15)—was intended to depict still more strikingly the deeply depressed condition of the woman. The price paid, moreover, is not to be regarded as purchase money, for which the wife was obtained from her parents; for it cannot be shown that the custom of purchasing a bride from her parents had any existence among the Israelites (see my *Bibl. Archäologie*, ii. § 109, 1). It was rather the marriage present (*mōhar*), which a bridegroom gave, not to the parents, but to the bride herself, as soon as her consent had been obtained. If, therefore, the woman was satisfied with fifteen shekels and fifteen ephahs of barley, she must have been in a state of very deep distress.

Ver. 3. “*And I said to her, Many days wilt thou sit for me: and not act the harlot, and not belong to a man; and thus will I also towards thee.*” Instead of granting the full conjugal fellowship of a wife to the woman whom he had acquired for himself, the prophet puts her into a state of detention, in which she was debarred from intercourse with any man. Sitting is equivalent to remaining quiet, and לֹא indicates that this is for the husband’s sake, and that he imposes it upon her out of affection to her, to reform her and train her up as a faithful wife. הָיָה לְאִישׁ, to be or become a man’s, signifies conjugal or sexual connection with him. Commentators differ in opinion as to whether the prophet himself is included or not. In all probability he is not included, as his conduct towards the woman is simply indicated in the last clause. The distinction between וְנָגַח and הָיָה לְאִישׁ, is that the former signifies intercourse with different paramours, the latter conjugal intercourse; here

adulterous intercourse with a single man. The last words, "and I also to thee" (towards thee), cannot have any other meaning, than that the prophet would act in the same way towards the wife as the wife towards every other man, *i.e.* would have no conjugal intercourse with her. The other explanations that have been given of these words, in which *v'gam* is rendered "and yet," or "and then," are arbitrary. The parallel is not drawn between the prophet and the wife, but between the prophet and the other man; in other words, he does not promise that during the period of the wife's detention he will not conclude a marriage with any other woman, but declares that he will have no more conjugal intercourse with her than any other man. This thought is required by the explanation of the figure in ver. 4. For, according to the former interpretation, the idea expressed would be this, that the Lord waited with patience and long-suffering for the reformation of His former nation, and would not plunge it into despair by adopting another nation in its place. But there is no hint whatever at any such thought as this in vers. 4, 5; and all that is expressed is, that He will not only cut off all intercourse on the part of His people with idols, but will also suspend, for a very long time, His own relation to Israel.

Ver. 4. "*For the sons of Israel will sit for many days without a king, and without a prince, and without slain-offering, and without monument, and without ephod and teraphim.*" The explanation of the figure is introduced with 'ק, because it contains the ground of the symbolical action. The objects, which are to be taken away from the Israelites, form three pairs, although only the last two are formally connected together by the omission of 'אָ before תְּרָפִים, so as to form one pair, whilst the rest are simply arranged one after another by the repetition of 'אָ before every one. As king and prince go together, so also do slain-offering and memorial. King and prince are the upholders of civil government; whilst slain-offering and memorial represent the nation's worship and religion. מִזְבֵּחַ, monument, is connected with idolatrous worship. The "monuments" were consecrated to Baal (Ex. xxiii. 24), and the erection of them was for that reason prohibited even in the law (Lev. xxvi. 1; Deut. xvi. 22: see at 1 Kings xiv. 23); but they were widely spread in the kingdom of Israel (2 Kings iii. 2, x.

26-28, xvii. 10), and they were also erected in Judah under idolatrous kings (1 Kings xiv. 23; 2 Kings xviii. 4, xxiii. 14; 2 Chron. xiv. 2, xxxi. 1). The *ephod* and *teraphim* did indeed form part of the apparatus of worship, but they are also specially mentioned as media employed in searching into the future. The *ephod*, the shoulder-dress of the high priest, to which the Urim and Thummim were attached, was the medium through which Jehovah communicated His revelations to the people, and was used for the purpose of asking the will of God (1 Sam. xxiii. 9, xxx. 7); and for the same purpose it was imitated in an idolatrous manner (Judg. xvii. 5, xviii. 5). The *teraphim* were Penates, which were worshipped as the givers of earthly prosperity, and also as oracular deities who revealed future events (see my *Bibl. Archäol.* § 90). The prophet mentions objects connected with both the worship of Jehovah and that of idols, because they were both mixed together in Israel, and for the purpose of showing to the people that the Lord would take away both the Jehovah-worship and also the worship of idols, along with the independent civil government. With the removal of the monarchy (see at ch. i. 4), or the dissolution of the kingdom, not only was the Jehovah-worship abolished, but an end was also put to the idolatry of the nation, since the people discovered the worthlessness of the idols from the fact that, when the judgment burst upon them, they could grant no deliverance; and notwithstanding the circumstance that, when carried into exile, they were transported into the midst of idolaters, the distress and misery into which they were then plunged filled them with abhorrence of idolatry (see at ch. ii. 7).

This threat was fulfilled in the history of the ten tribes, when they were carried away with the Assyrian captivity, in which they continue for the most part to the present day without a monarchy, without Jehovah-worship, and without a priesthood. For it is evident that by Israel the ten tribes are intended, not only from the close connection between this prophecy and ch. i., where Israel is expressly distinguished from Judah (ch. i. 7), but also from the prospect held out in ver. 5, that the sons of Israel will return to David their king, which clearly points to the falling away of the ten tribes from the house of David. At the same time, as the carrying away of

Judah also is presupposed in ch. i. 7, 11, and therefore what is said of Israel is transferred *implicite* to Judah, we must not restrict the threat contained in this verse to the Israel of the ten tribes alone, but must also understand it as referring to the Babylonian and Roman exile of the Jews, just as in the time of king Asa (2 Chron. xv. 2-4). The prophet Azariah predicted this to the kingdom of Judah in a manner which furnishes an unmistakeable support to Hosea's prophecy.

Ver. 5. "*Afterward will the sons of Israel turn and seek Jehovah their God, and David their king, and will go trembling to Jehovah and to His goodness at the end of the days.*" This section, like the previous one, closes with the announcement of the eventual conversion of Israel, which was not indicated in the symbolical action which precedes it, but is added to complete the interpretation of the symbol. Seeking Jehovah their God is connected with seeking David their king. For just as the falling away of the ten tribes from the royal house of David was merely the sequel and effect of their inward apostasy from Jehovah, and was openly declared in the setting up of the golden calves; the true return to the Lord cannot take place without a return to David their king, since God has promised the kingdom to David and his seed for ever (2 Sam. vii. 13, 16), and therefore David is the only true king of Israel (*their* king). This King David, however, is no other than the Messiah. For although David received the promise of the everlasting continuance of his government, not with reference to his own person, but for his seed, *i.e.* his family; and on the ground of this promise, the whole of the royal house of David is frequently embraced under the expression "King David," so that we might imagine that David is introduced here, not as an individual, but as signifying the Davidic family; yet we must not understand it on this account as referring to such historical representatives of the Davidic government as Zerubbabel, and other earthly representatives of the house of David, since the return of the Israelites to "their King David" was not to take place till '*achărîth hayyāmim* (the end of the days). For "the end of the days" does not denote the future generally, but always the closing future of the kingdom of God, commencing with the coming of the Messiah (see at Gen. xlix. 1; Isa. ii. 2). *Pâchad 'el Y'hôvâh*, to shake or tremble to Jehovah, is a preg-

nant expression for “to turn to Jehovah with trembling;” i.e. either trembling at the holiness of God, in the consciousness of their own sinfulness and unworthiness, or else with anguish and distress, in the consciousness of their utter helplessness. It is used here in the latter sense, as the two parallels, ch. v. 15, “in their affliction they will seek me,” and ch. xi. 11, “they shall tremble as a bird,” etc., clearly show. This is also required by the following expression, וְאֵלֹהֵינוּ, which is to be understood, according to ch. ii. 7, as denoting the goodness of God manifested in His gifts. Affliction will drive them to seek the Lord, and His goodness which is inseparable from Himself (Hengstenberg). Compare Jer. xxxi. 12, where “the goodness of the Lord” is explained as corn, new wine, oil, lambs, and oxen, these being the gifts that come from the goodness of the Lord (Zech. ix. 17; Ps. xxvii. 13, xxxi. 20). He who has the Lord for his God will want no good thing.

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## II. THE UNGODLINESS OF ISRAEL. ITS PUNISHMENT, AND FINAL DELIVERANCE.—CHAP. IV.—XIV.

The spiritual adultery of Israel, with its consequences, which the prophet has exposed in the first part, and chiefly in a symbolical mode, is more elaborately detailed here, not only with regard to its true nature, viz. the religious apostasy and moral depravity which prevailed throughout the ten tribes, but also in its inevitable consequences, viz. the destruction of the kingdom and rejection of the people; and this is done with a repeated side-glance at Judah. To this there is appended a solemn appeal to return to the Lord, and a promise that the Lord will have compassion upon the penitent, and renew His covenant of grace with them.

## I. THE DEPRAVITY OF ISRAEL, AND ITS EXPOSURE TO PUNISHMENT.—CHAP. IV.—VI. 3.

The first section, in which the prophet demonstrates the necessity for judgment, by exposing the sins and follies of



Israel, is divided into two parts by the similar openings, "Hear the word of the Lord" in ch. iv. 1, and "Hear ye this" in ch. v. 1. The distinction between the two halves is, that in ch. iv. the reproof of their sins passes from Israel as a whole, to the sins of the priests in particular; whilst in ch. v. it passes from the ruin of the priesthood to the depravity of the whole nation, and announces the judgment of devastation upon Ephraim, and then closes in ch. vi. 1-3 with a command to return to the Lord. The contents of the two chapters, however, are so arranged, that it is difficult to divide them into strophes.

*The Sins of Israel and the Visitation of God.*—Chap. iv.

Vers. 1-5 form the first strophe, and contain, so to speak, the theme and the sum and substance of the whole of the following threatening of punishment and judgment. Ver. 1. "*Hear the word of Jehovah, ye sons of Israel! for Jehovah has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land; for there is no truth, and no love, and no knowledge of God in the land.*" Israel of the ten tribes is here addressed, as ver. 15 clearly shows. The Lord has a controversy with it, has to accuse and judge it (cf. Mic. vi. 2), because truth, love, and the knowledge of God have vanished from the land. '*Emeth* and '*chesed* are frequently associated, not merely as divine attributes, but also as human virtues. They are used here in the latter sense, as in Prov. iii. 3. "There is no '*emeth*, *i.e.* no truthfulness, either in speech or action, no one trusting another any more" (cf. Jer. ix. 3, 4). '*Chesed* is not human love generally, but love to inferiors, and to those who need help or compassionate love. Truth and love are mutually conditions, the one of the other. "Truth cannot be sustained without mercy; and mercy without truth makes men negligent; so that the one ought to be mingled with the other" (Jerome). They both have their roots in the knowledge of God, of which they are the fruit (Jer. xxii. 16; Isa. xi. 9); for the knowledge of God is not merely "an acquaintance with His nature and will" (Hitzig), but knowledge of the love, faithfulness, and compassion of God, resting upon the experience of the heart. Such knowledge not only produces fear of God, but also love and truthfulness towards

brethren (cf. Eph. iv. 32, Col. iii. 12 sqq.). Where this is wanting, injustice gains the upper hand.

Ver. 2. "*Swearing, and lying, and murdering, and stealing, and committing adultery; they break in, and blood reaches to blood.*" The enumeration of the prevailing sins and crimes commences with *infin. absol.*, to set forth the acts referred to as such with the greater emphasis. 'Aláh, to swear, in combination with *kichēsh*, signifies false swearing (= אָלַח בְּכִשֵּׁשׁ in ch. x. 4; compare the similar passage in Jer. vii. 9); but we must not on that account take *kichēsh* as subordinate to 'aláh, or connect them together, so as to form one idea. Swearing refers to the breach of the second commandment, stealing to that of the eighth; and the infinitives which follow enumerate the sins against the fifth, the seventh, and the sixth commandments. With *pārātsū* the address passes into the finite tense (Luther follows the LXX. and Vulg., and connects it with what precedes; but this is a mistake). The perfects, *pārātsū* and *nāgā'u*, are not preterites, but express a completed act, reaching from the past into the present. *Pārats* to tear, to break, signifies in this instance a violent breaking in upon others, for the purpose of robbery and murder, "*grassari* as פָּרִיצִים, i.e. as murderers and robbers" (Hitzig), whereby one bloody deed immediately followed another (Ezek. xviii. 10). *Dāmim*: blood shed with violence, a bloody deed, a capital crime.

These crimes bring the land to ruin. Ver. 3. "*Therefore the land mourns, and every dweller therein, of beasts of the field and birds of the heaven, wastes away; and even the fishes of the sea perish.*" These words affirm not only that the inanimate creation suffers in consequence of the sins and crimes of men, but that the moral depravity of men causes the physical destruction of all other creatures. As God has given to man the dominion over all beasts, and over all the earth, that he may use it for the glory of God; so does He punish the wickedness of men by pestilences, or by the devastation of the earth. The mourning of the earth and the wasting away of the animals are the natural result of the want of rain and the great drought that ensues, such as was the case in the time of Ahab throughout the kingdom of the ten tribes (1 Kings xvii. 18), and judging from Amos i. 2, viii. 8, may have occurred repeatedly with the continued idolatry of the people. The verbs are not

futures, in which case the punishment would be only threatened, but aorists, expressing what has already happened, and will continue still. כָּל־יֹשֵׁב בָּהָּ (every dweller therein) : these are not the men, but the animals, as the further definition בְּחַיֵּית וְנֹף shows. כָּ is used in the enumeration of the individuals, as in Gen. vii. 21, ix. 10. The fishes are mentioned last, and introduced with the emphasizing וְנֹף, to show that the drought would prevail to such an extent, that even lakes and other waters would be dried up. וְנֹף, to be collected, to be taken away, to disappear or perish, as in Isa. xvi. 10, lx. 20, Jer. xlviii. 33.

Notwithstanding the outburst of the divine judgments, the people prove themselves to be incorrigible in their sins. Ver. 4. "Only let no man reason, and let no man punish; yet thy people are like priest-strivers." וְנֹף is to be explained from the tacit antithesis, that with such depravity there would be much to punish; but this would be useless. The first clause contains a *desperatæ nequitiae argumentum*. The notion that the second 'ish is to be taken as an object, is decidedly to be rejected, since it cannot be defended either from the expression וְנֹף בְּאִישׁ in Isa. iii. 5, or by referring to Amos ii. 15, and does not yield any meaning at all in harmony with the second half of the verse. For there is no need to prove that it does not mean, "Every one who has a priest blames the priest instead of himself when any misfortune happens to him," as Hitzig supposes, since עַם signifies the nation, and not an individual. וְנֹף is attached adversatively, giving the reason for the previous thought in the sense of "since thy people," or simply "thy people are surely like those who dispute with the priest." The unusual expression, priest-disputers, equivalent to quarrellers with the priest, an analogous expression to boundary-movers in ch. v. 10, may be explained, as Luther, and Grotius, and others suppose, from the law laid down in Deut. xvii. 12, 13, according to which every law-suit was to be ultimately decided by the priest and judge as the supreme tribunal, and in which, whoever presumes to resist the verdict of this tribunal, is threatened with the punishment of death. The meaning is, that the nation resembled those who are described in the law as rebels against the priest (Hengstenberg, *Dissertations on Pentateuch*, vol. i. p. 112, translation). The suffix "thy nation" does not refer to the prophet, but to the sons of Israel, the sum total of whom

constituted their nation, which is directly addressed in the following verse.

Ver. 5. "*And so wilt thou stumble by day, and the prophet with thee will also stumble by night, and I will destroy thy mother.*" *Kāshal* is not used here with reference to the sin, as Simson supposes, but for the punishment, and signifies to fall, in the sense of to perish, as in ch. xiv. 2, Isa. xxxi. 3, etc. הַיּוֹם is not to-day, or in the day when the punishment shall fall, but "by day," *interdiu*, on account of the antithesis לַלַּיְלָה, as in Neh. iv. 16. נְבִיִּים, used without an article in the most indefinite generality, refers to false prophets—not of Baal, however, but of Jehovah as worshipped under the image of a calf—who practised prophesying as a trade, and judging from 1 Kings xxii. 6, were very numerous in the kingdom of Israel. The declaration that the people should fall by day and the prophets by night, does not warrant our interpreting the day and night allegorically, the former as the time when the way of right is visible, and the latter as the time when the way is hidden or obscured; but according to the parallelism of the clauses, it is to be understood as signifying that the people and the prophets would fall at all times, by night and by day. "There would be no time free from the slaughter, either of individuals in the nation at large, or of false prophets" (Rosenmüller). In the second half of the verse, the destruction of the whole nation and kingdom is announced (*'ēm* is the whole nation, as in ch. ii. 2, Heb. 4.).

This thought is carried out still further in the second strophe, vers. 6–10. Ver. 6. "*My nation is destroyed for lack of knowledge; for thou, the knowledge hast thou rejected, and so do I reject thee from being a priest to me. Thou didst forget the law of thy God; thy sons will I also forget.*" The speaker is Jehovah: my nation, that is to say, the nation of Jehovah. This nation perishes for lack of the knowledge of God and His salvation. *Hadda'ath* (the knowledge) with the definite article points back to *da'ath Elohim* (knowledge of God) in ver. 1. This knowledge Israel might have drawn from the law, in which God had revealed His counsel and will (Deut. xxx. 15), but it would not. It rejected the knowledge and forgot the law of its God, and would be rejected and forgotten by God in consequence. In *'attāh* (thou) it is not the priests who are addressed—the custodians of the law and promoters of divine knowledge

in the nation—but the whole nation of the ten tribes which adhered to the image-worship set up by Jeroboam, with its illegal priesthood (1 Kings xii. 26–33), in spite of all the divine threats and judgments, through which one dynasty after another was destroyed, and would not desist from this sin of Jeroboam. The Lord would therefore reject it from being priest, *i.e.* would deprive it of the privilege of being a priestly nation (Ex. xix. 6), would strip it of its priestly rank, and make it like the heathen. According to Olshausen (*Heb. Gram.* p. 179), the anomalous form הַנְּסִיחִים is only a copyist's error for הַנְּסִיחִי; but Ewald (§ 247, *e*) regards it as an Aramæan pausal form. "Thy sons," the children of the national community, regarded as a mother, are the individual members of the nation.

Ver. 7. "*The more they increased, the more they sinned against me; their glory will I change into shame.*" כְּרָבָם, "according to their becoming great," does not refer to the increase of the population only (ch. ix. 11), but also to its growing into a powerful nation, to the increase of its wealth and prosperity, in consequence of which the population multiplied. The progressive increase of the greatness of the nation was only attended by increasing sin. As the nation attributed to its own idols the blessings upon which its prosperity was founded, and by which it was promoted (cf. ch. ii. 7), and looked upon them as the fruit and reward of its worship, it was strengthened in this delusion by increasing prosperity, and more and more estranged from the living God. The Lord would therefore turn the glory of Ephraim, *i.e.* its greatness or wealth, into shame. כְּבֹדָם is probably chosen on account of its assonance with כְּרָבָם. For the fact itself, compare ch. ii. 3, 9–11.

Ver. 8. "*The sin of my people they eat, and after their transgression do they lift up their soul.*" The reproof advances from the sin of the whole nation to the sin of the priesthood. For it is evident that this is intended, not only from the contents of the present verse, but still more from the commencement of the next. *Chatta'th 'ammī* (the sin of my people) is the sin-offering of the people, the flesh of which the priests were commanded to eat, to wipe away the sin of the people (see Lev. vi. 26, and the remarks upon this law at Lev. x. 17). The fulfilment of this command, however, became a sin on the part of the priests, from the fact that they directed their soul, *i.e.* their

longing desire, to the transgression of the people; in other words, that they wished the sins of the people to be increased, in order that they might receive a good supply of sacrificial meat to eat. The prophet evidently uses the word *chattāth*, which signifies both sin and sin-offering, in a double sense, and intends to designate the eating of the flesh of the sin-offering as eating or swallowing the sin of the people. לָקַח נַפְשׁוֹ, to lift up or direct the soul after anything, i.e. to cherish a longing for it, as in Deut. xxiv. 15, etc. The singular suffix attached to *naphshō* (his soul) is to be taken distributively: "(they) every one his soul."<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 9. "*Therefore it will happen as to the people so to the priest; and I will visit his ways upon him, and I repay to him his doing.*" Since the priests had abused their office for the purpose of filling their own bellies, they would perish along with the nation. The suffixes in the last clauses refer to the priest, although the retribution threatened would fall upon the people also, since it would happen to the priest as to the people. This explains the fact that in ver. 10 the first clause still applies to the priest; whereas in the second clause the prophecy once more embraces the entire nation.

Ver. 10. "*They will eat, and not be satisfied; they commit whoredom, and do not increase: for they have left off taking heed to Jehovah.*" The first clause, which still refers to the priests on account of the evident retrospect in יִאֲכָלוּ וְיִזְכְּלוּ in ver. 8, is taken from the threat in Lev. xxvi. 16. The following word *hiznū*, to practise whoredom (with the meaning of the *kal* intensified as in ver. 18, not to seduce to whoredom), refers to the whole nation, and is to be taken in its literal sense, as the antithesis לֹא יִפְרֹצוּ requires. *Pārats*, to spread out, to increase in number, as in Ex. i. 12 and Gen. xxviii. 14. In the last clause לֹא יִשְׂמְרוּ belongs to Jehovah: they have given up keeping Jehovah, i.e. giving heed to Him (cf. Zech. xi. 11). This applies to the priests as well as to the people. Therefore God withdraws His blessing from both, so that those who eat are not satisfied, and those who commit whoredom do not increase.

The allusion to whoredom leads to the description of the

<sup>1</sup> It is evident from this verse, that the sacrificial worship was maintained in the kingdom of Israel according to the ritual of the Mosaic law, and that the Israelitish priests were still in possession of the rights conferred by the Pentateuch upon Levitical priests.

idolatrous conduct of the people in the third strophe, vers. 11–14, which is introduced with a general sentence. Ver. 11. "*Whoring and wine and new wine take away the heart (the understanding)*". *Z'nûth* is licentiousness in the literal sense of the word, which is always connected with debauchery. What is true of this, namely, that it weakens the mental power, shows itself in the folly of idolatry into which the nation has fallen. Ver. 12. "*My nation asks its wood, and its stick prophesies to it: for a spirit of whoredom has seduced, and they go away whoring from under their God.*" שָׁאַל בַּיָּדֹהּ is formed after שָׁאַל בַּיהוָה, to ask for a divine revelation of the idols made of wood (Jer. x. 3; Hab. ii. 19), namely, the teraphim (cf. ch. iii. 4, and Ezek. xxi. 26). This reproof is strengthened by the antithesis *my nation*, i.e. the nation of Jehovah, the living God, and *its wood*, the wood made into idols by the people. The next clause, "and its stick is showing it," sc. future events (*higgid* as in Isa. xli. 22, 23, etc.), is supposed by Cyril of Alexandria to refer to the practice of rhabdomancy, which he calls an invention of the Chaldæans, and describes as consisting in this, that two rods were held upright, and then allowed to fall while forms of incantation were being uttered; and the oracle was inferred from the way in which they fell, whether forwards or backwards, to the right or to the left. The course pursued was probably similar to that connected with the use of the wishing rods.<sup>1</sup> The people do this because a spirit of whoredom has besotted them.

By *rûäch z'nûnim* the whoredom is represented as a demoniacal power, which has seized upon the nation. *Z'nûnim* probably includes both carnal and spiritual whoredom, since idolatry, especially the Asherah-worship, was connected with gross licentiousness. The missing object to הִתְעָה may easily be supplied from the context. זָנָה מִתַּחַת אֵל, which differs from זָנָה מֵאֶחָרִי (ch. i. 2), signifies "to whore away from under God," i.e. so as to withdraw from subjection to God.

This whoredom is still further explained in the next verse. Ver. 13. "*They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains, and upon the hills they burn incense, under oak and poplar and*

<sup>1</sup> According to Herod. iv. 67, this kind of soothsaying was very common among the Scythians (see at Ezek. xxi. 26). Another description of rhabdomancy is described by Abarbanel, according to Maimonides and Moses Mikkotz: cf. Marck and Rosenmüller on this passage.

*terebinth, for their shadow is good; therefore your daughters commit whoredom, and your daughters-in-law commit adultery.*" Mountain-tops and hills were favourite places for idolatrous worship; because men thought, that there they were nearer to heaven and to the deity (see at Deut. xii. 2). From a comparison of these and other passages, *e.g.* Jer. ii. 20 and iii. 6, it is evident that the following words, "under oak," etc., are not to be understood as signifying that trees standing by themselves upon mountains and hills were selected as places for idolatrous worship; but that, in addition to mountains and hills, green shady trees in the plains and valleys were also chosen for this purpose. By the enumeration of the oak, the poplar (*libneh*, the white poplar according to the Sept. *in loc.* and the Vulg. at Gen. xxxvii. 30, or the storax-tree, as the LXX. render it at Gen. xxxvii. 30), and the terebinth, the frequent expression "under every green tree" (Deut. xii. 2, 1 Kings xiv. 23, Jer. ii. 20, iii. 6) is individualized. Such trees were selected because they gave a good shade, and in the burning lands of the East a shady place fills the mind with sacred awe. עֲלֵי, therefore, on that account, *i.e.* not because the shadow of the trees invites to it, but because the places for idolatrous worship erected on every hand presented an opportunity for it; therefore the daughters and daughters-in-law carried on prostitution there. The worship of the Canaanitish and Babylonian goddess of nature was associated with prostitution, and with the giving up of young girls and women (compare Movers, *Phönizier*, i. pp. 583, 595 sqq.).

Ver. 14. "*I will not visit it upon your daughters that they commit whoredom, nor upon your daughters-in-law that they commit adultery; for they themselves go aside with harlots, and with holy maidens do they sacrifice: and the nation that does not see is ruined.*" God would not punish the daughters and daughters-in-law for their whoredom, because the elder ones did still worse. "So great was the number of fornications, that all punishment ceased, in despair of any amendment" (Jerome). With הִנֵּה God turns away from the reckless nation, as unworthy of being further addressed or exhorted, in righteous indignation at such presumptuous sinning, and proceeds to speak about it in the third person: for "*they* (the fathers and husbands, not 'the priests,' as Simson supposes,



since there is no allusion to them here) go," etc. פָּיַל, *piel* in an intransitive sense, to separate one's self, to go aside for the purpose of being alone with the harlots. Sacrificing with the *q'deshôth*, i.e. with prostitutes, or *Hetairai* (see at Gen. xxxviii. 14), may have taken its rise in the prevailing custom, viz. that fathers of families came with their wives to offer yearly sacrifices, and the wives shared in the sacrificial meals (1 Sam. i. 3 sqq.). Coming to the altar with *Hetairai* instead of their own wives, was the climax of shameless licentiousness. A nation that had sunk so low and had lost all perception must perish. לָכַט = לָכַט: to throw to the earth; or in the *niphal*, to cast headlong into destruction (Prov. x. 8, 10).

A different turn is now given to the prophecy, viz. that if Israel would not desist from idolatry, Judah ought to beware of participating in the guilt of Israel; and with this the fourth strophe (vers. 15-19) is introduced, containing the announcement of the inevitable destruction of the kingdom of the ten tribes. Ver. 15. "*If thou commit whoredom, O Israel, let not Judah offend! Come ye not to Gilgal, go not up to Bethaven, and swear ye not by the life of Jehovah.*" עָשָׂה, to render one's self guilty by participating in the whoredom, i.e. the idolatry, of Israel. This was done by making pilgrimages to the places of idolatrous worship in that kingdom, viz. to *Gilgal*, i.e. not the Gilgal in the valley of the Jordan, but the northern Gilgal upon the mountains, which has been preserved in the village of Jiljilia to the south-west of Silo (Seilun; see at Deut. xi. 30 and Josh. viii. 35). In the time of Elijah and Elisha it was the seat of a school of the prophets (2 Kings ii. 1, iv. 38); but it was afterwards chosen as the seat of one form of idolatrous worship, the origin and nature of which are unknown (compare ch. ix. 15, xii. 12; Amos iv. 4, v. 5). *Bethaven* is not the place of that name mentioned in Josh. vii. 2, which was situated to the south-east of Bethel; but, as Amos iv. 4 and v. 5 clearly show, a name which Hosea adopted from Amos v. 5 for *Bethel* (the present *Beitin*), to show that *Bethel*, the house of God, had become Bethaven, a house of idols, through the setting up of the golden calf there (1 Kings xii. 29). Swearing by the name of Jehovah was commanded in the law (Deut. vi. 13, x. 20; compare Jer. iv. 2); but this oath was to have its roots in the fear

of Jehovah, to be simply an emanation of His worship. The worshippers of idols, therefore, were not to take it into their mouths. The command not to swear by the life of Jehovah is connected with the previous warnings. Going to Gilgal to worship idols, and swearing by Jehovah, cannot go together. The confession of Jehovah in the mouth of an idolater is hypocrisy, pretended piety, which is more dangerous than open ungodliness, because it lulls the conscience to sleep.

The reason for this warning is given in vers. 16 sqq., viz. the punishment which will fall upon Israel. Ver. 16. "*For Israel has become refractory like a refractory cow; now will Jehovah feed them like a lamb in a wide field.*" סוֹרֵר, unmanageable, refractory (Deut. xxi. 18, cf. Zech. vii. 11). As Israel would not submit to the yoke of the divine law, it should have what it desired. God would feed it like a lamb, which being in a wide field becomes the prey of wolves and wild beasts, i.e. He would give it up to the freedom of banishment and dispersion among the nations.

Ver. 17. "*Ephraim is joined to idols, let it alone.*" חִבֵּר עֲצֻמִּים, bound up with idols, so that it cannot give them up. Ephraim, the most powerful of the ten tribes, is frequently used in the loftier style of the prophets for Israel of the ten tribes. הִנֵּח־לּוֹ, as in 2 Sam. xvi. 11, 2 Kings xxiii. 18, let him do as he likes, or remain as he is. Every attempt to bring the nation away from its idolatry is vain. The expression *hannach-lō* does not necessitate the assumption, however, that these words of Jehovah are addressed to the prophets. They are taken from the language of ordinary life, and simply mean: it may continue in its idolatry, the punishment will not long be delayed.

Ver. 18. "*Their drinking has degenerated; whoring they have committed whoredom; their shields have loved, loved shame.*" Ver. 19. "*The wind has wrapt it up in its wings, so that they are put to shame because of their sacrifices.*" פֵּר from פִּיר, to fall off, degenerate, as in Jer. ii. 21. סָבָא is probably strong, intoxicating wine (cf. Isa. i. 22; Nah. i. 10); here it signifies the effect of this wine, viz. intoxication. Others take *sār* in the usual sense of departing, after 1 Sam. i. 14, and understand the sentence conditionally: "when their intoxication is gone, they commit whoredom." But Hitzig has very properly objected to this, that it is intoxication which leads to licentious-

ness, and not temperance. Moreover, the strengthening of *hiznū* by the *infin. abs.* is not in harmony with this explanation. The *hiphil* *hiznāh* is used in an emphatic sense, as in ver. 10. The meaning of the last half of the verse is also a disputed point, more especially on account of the word *הִבִּי*, which only occurs here, and which can only be the imperative of *יָהֵב* (*הִבִּי* for *הָהֵב*), or a contraction of *אָהֵבִי*. All other explanations are arbitrary. But we are precluded from taking the word as an imperative by *קָלֶן*, which altogether confuses the sense, if we adopt the rendering "their shields love 'Give ye'—shame." We therefore prefer taking *הִבִּי* as a contraction of *אָהֵבִי*, and *אָהֵבִי הִבִּי* as a construction resembling the *pealal* form, in which the latter part of the fully formed verb is repeated, with the verbal person as an independent form (Ewald, § 120), viz. "their shields loved, loved shame," which yields a perfectly suitable thought. The princes are figuratively represented as *shields*, as in Ps. xlvii. 10, as the supporters and protectors of the state. They love shame, inasmuch as they love the sin which brings shame. This shame will inevitably burst upon the kingdom. The tempest has already seized upon the people, or wrapt them up with its wings (cf. Ps. xviii. 11, civ. 3), and will carry them away (Isa. lvii. 13). *צָרַר*, literally to bind together, hence to lay hold of, wrap up. *Rūdāch*, the wind, or tempest, is a figurative term denoting destruction, like *רֵיחַ קָרִים* in ch. xiii. 15 and Ezek. v. 3, 4. *אֹתָהּ* refers to Ephraim represented as a woman, like the suffix attached to *מִנִּיָּהּ* in ver. 18. *יִבְשׁוּ מִזְבַּחֹתָם*, to be put to shame on account of their sacrifices, i.e. to be deceived in their confidence in their idols (*bōsh* with *min* as in ch. x. 6, Jer. ii. 36, xii. 13, etc.), or to discover that the sacrifices which they offered to Jehovah, whilst their heart was attached to the idols, did not save from ruin. The plural formation *זִבְחֹתָם* for *זִבְחָתָם* only occurs here, but it has many analogies in its favour, and does not warrant our altering the reading into *מִזְבַּחֹתָם*, after the Sept. *ἐν τῶν θυσιαστηρίων*, as Hitzig proposes; whilst the inadmissibility of this proposal is sufficiently demonstrated by the fact that there is nothing to justify the omission of the indispensable *מן*, and the cases which Hitzig cites as instances in which *min* is omitted (viz. Zech. xiv. 10, Ps. lxviii. 14, and Deut. xxiii. 11) are based upon a false interpretation.

*The Judgment.*—Chap. v.—vi. 3.

With the words "Hear ye this," the reproof of the sins of Israel makes a new start, and is specially addressed to the priests and the king's house, *i.e.* the king and his court, to announce to the leaders of the nation the punishment that will follow their apostasy from God and their idolatry, by which they have plunged the people and kingdom headlong into destruction. Vers. 1-5 form the first strophe. Ver. 1. "*Hear ye this, ye priests; and give heed thereto, O house of Israel; and observe it, O house of the king! for the judgment applies to you; for ye have become a snare at Mizpah, and a net spread upon Tabor.*" By the word "*this*," which points back to ver. 4, the prophecy that follows is attached to the preceding one. Beside the priests and the king's house, *i.e.* the royal family, in which the counsellors and adjutants surrounding the king are probably included, the house of Israel, that is to say, the people of the ten tribes regarded as a family, is summoned to hear, because what was about to be announced applied to the people and kingdom as a whole. There is nothing to warrant our understanding by the "house of Israel," the heads of the nation or elders. *Lâkhem hammishpât* does not mean, It rests with you to know or to defend the right; nor, "Ye ought to hear the reproof," as Hitzig explains it, for *mishpât* in this connection signifies neither "the maintenance of justice" nor "a reproof," but the judgment about to be executed by God, τὸ κρίμα (LXX.). The thought is this, The judgment will fall upon you; and *lâkhem* refers chiefly to the priests and the king's house, as the explanatory clause which follows clearly shows. It is impossible to determine with certainty what king's house is intended. Probably that of Zechariah or Menahem; possibly both, since Hosea prophesied in both reigns, and merely gives the quintessence of his prophetic addresses in his book. Going to Asshur refers rather to Menahem than to Zechariah (comp. 2 Kings xv. 19, 20). In the figures employed, the bird-trap (*pach*) and the net spread for catching birds, it can only be the rulers of the nation who are represented as a trap and net, and the birds must denote the people generally who are enticed into the net of destruction and

caught (cf. ch. ix. 8).<sup>1</sup> *Mizpah*, as a parallel to Tabor, can only be the lofty *Mizpah* of Gilead (Judg. x. 17, xi. 29) or Ramah-Mizpah, which probably stood upon the site of the modern es-Salt (see at Deut. iv. 43); so that, whilst Tabor represents the land on this side of the Jordan, Mizpah, which resembled it in situation, is chosen to represent the land to the east of the river.<sup>2</sup> Both places were probably noted as peculiarly adapted for bird-catching, since Tabor is still thickly wooded. The supposition that they had been used as places of sacrifice in connection with idolatrous worship, cannot be inferred from the verse before us, nor is it rendered probable by other passages.

This accusation is still further vindicated in vers. 2 sqq., by a fuller exposure of the moral corruption of the nation. Ver. 2. "*And excesses they have spread out deeply; but I am a chastisement to them all.*" The meaning of the first half of the verse, which is very difficult, and has been very differently interpreted by both ancient and modern expositors, has been brought out best by Delitzsch (Com. on Ps. ci. 3), who renders it, "they understand from the very foundation how to spread out transgressions." For the word שָׁטִים the meaning transgressions is well established by the use of שָׁטִים in Ps. ci. 3, where Hengstenberg, Hupfeld, and Delitzsch all agree that this is the proper rendering (see Ewald's philological defence of it at § 146, e). In the psalm referred to, however, the expression שָׁטִים עָשָׂה also shows that *shachātāh* is the inf. *piel*, and *sētīm* the accusative of the object. And it follows from this that *shachātāh* neither means to slaughter or slaughter sacrifices, nor can be used for שָׁחַתָּה in the sense of acting injuriously, but that it is to be interpreted according to the *shāchūth* in 1 Kings x. 16, 17, in the sense of stretching, stretching out; so that there is no necessity to take שָׁחַת in the

<sup>1</sup> Jerome has given a very good explanation of the figure: "I have appointed you as watchmen among the people, and set you in the highest place of honour, that ye might govern the erring people; but ye have become a trap, and are to be called sportsmen rather than watchmen."

<sup>2</sup> As Tabor, for instance, rises up as a solitary conical hill (see at Judg. iv. 6), so es-Salt is built about the sides of a round steep hill, which rises up in a narrow rocky valley, and upon the summit of which there stands a strong fortification (see Seetzen in Burckhardt's *Reisen in Syrien*, p. 1061).

sense of שָׁטָה, as Delitzsch does, though the use of עָלָה for עָלָה in ch. x. 9 may no doubt be adduced in its support. שָׁטָה, from שָׁטָה (to turn aside, Num. v. 12, 19), are literally digressions or excesses, answering to the *hiznâh* in ver. 3, the leading sin of Israel. "They have deepened to stretch out excesses," i.e. they have gone to great lengths, or are deeply sunken in excesses,—a thought quite in harmony with the context, to which the threat is appended. "I (Jehovah) am a chastisement to them all, to the rulers as well as to the people;" i.e. I will punish them all (cf. ver. 12), because their idolatrous conduct is well known to me. The way is thus prepared for the two following verses.

Ver. 3. "*I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from me : for now, O Ephraim, thou hast committed whoredom ; Israel has defiled itself.*" Ver. 4. "*Their works do not allow to return to their God, for the spirit of whoredom is in them, and they know not Jehovah.*" By עָלָה, the whoredom of Ephraim is designated as in fact lying before them, and therefore undeniable ; but not, as Hitzig supposes, an act which has taken place once for all, viz. the choice of a king, by which the severance of the kingdoms and the previous idolatry had been sanctioned afresh. נִטְמָא, defiled by whoredom, i.e. idolatry. Their works do not allow them to return to their God, because the works are merely an emanation of the character and state of the heart, and in their hearts the demon of whoredom has its seat (cf. ch. iv. 12), and the knowledge of the Lord is wanting ; that is to say, the demoniacal power of idolatry has taken complete possession of the heart, and stifled the knowledge of the true God. The rendering, "they do not direct their actions to this," is incorrect, and cannot be sustained by an appeal to the use of נָתַן לָב in Judg. xv. 1 and 1 Sam. xxiv. 8 sqq., or to Judg. iii. 28.

Ver. 5. "*And the pride of Ephraim will testify against its face, and Israel and Ephraim will stumble in their guilt ; Judah has also stumbled with them.*" As the meaning "to answer," to bear witness against a person, is well established in the case of עָנָה (cf. Num. xxxv. 30, Deut. xix. 18, and Isa. iii. 9), and עָנָה בְּפָנַי also occurs in Job xvi. 8 in this sense, we must retain the same meaning here, as Jerome and others have done. And there is the more reason for this, because the explanation based upon the LXX., καὶ ταπεινωθήσεται ἡ ὕβρις, "the

haughtiness of Israel will be humbled," can hardly be reconciled with גִּבּוֹרִי. "The pride of Israel," moreover, is not the haughtiness of Israel, but that of which Israel is proud, or rather the glory of Israel. We might understand by this the flourishing condition of the kingdom, after Amos vi. 8; but it would be only by its decay that this would bear witness against the sin of Israel, so that "the glory of Israel" would stand for "the decay of that glory," which would be extremely improbable. We must therefore explain "the glory of Israel" here and in ch. vii. 10 in accordance with Amos viii. 7, *i.e.* we must understand it as referring to Jehovah, who is Israel's eminence and glory; in which case we obtain the following very appropriate thought: They know not Jehovah, they do not concern themselves about Him; therefore He Himself will bear witness by judgments, by the destruction of their false glory (cf. ch. ii. 10-14), against the face of Israel, *i.e.* bear witness to their face. This thought occurs without ambiguity in ch. vii. 10. Israel will stumble in its sin, *i.e.* will fall and perish (as in ch. iv. 5). Judah also falls with Israel, because it has participated in Israel's sin (ch. iv. 15).

Israel, moreover, will not be able to avert the threatening judgment by sacrifices. Jehovah will withdraw from the faithless generation, and visit it with His judgments. This is the train of thought in the next strophe (vers. 6-10). Ver. 6. *"They will go with their sheep and their oxen to seek Jehovah, and will not find Him: He has withdrawn Himself from them."* Ver. 7. *"They acted treacherously against Jehovah, for they have born strange children: now will the new moon devour them with their fields."* The offering of sacrifices will be no help to them, because God has withdrawn Himself from them, and does not hear their prayers; for God has no pleasure in sacrifices which are offered in an impenitent state of mind (cf. ch. vi. 6; Isa. i. 11 sq.; Jer. vii. 21 sq.; Ps. xl. 7, l. 8 sq.). The reason for this is given in ver. 7. *Bâgad*, to act faithlessly, which is frequently applied to the infidelity of a wife towards her husband (*e.g.* Jer. iii. 20; Mal. ii. 14; cf. Ex. xxi. 8), points to the conjugal relation in which Israel stood to Jehovah. Hence the figure which follows. "Strange children" are such as do not belong to the home (Deut. xxv. 5), *i.e.* such as have not sprung from the conjugal union. In actual fact, the expression is

equivalent to בְּנֵי זָרִים in ch. i. 2, ii. 4, though *zâr* does not expressly mean "adulterous." Israel ought to have begotten children of God in the maintenance of the covenant with the Lord; but in its apostasy from God it had begotten an adulterous generation, children whom the Lord could not acknowledge as His own. "The new moon will devour them," viz. those who act so faithlessly. The meaning is not, "they will be destroyed on the next new moon;" but the new moon, as the festal season, on which sacrifices were offered (1 Sam. xx. 6, 29; Isa. i. 13, 14), stands here for the sacrifices themselves that were offered upon it. The meaning is this: your sacrificial feast, your hypocritical worship, so far from bringing you salvation, will rather prove your ruin. חֲלִיקֵיהֶם are not sacrificial portions, but the hereditary portions of Israel, the portions of land that fell to the different families and households, and from the produce of which they offered sacrifices to the Lord.<sup>1</sup>

The prophet sees in spirit the judgment already falling upon the rebellious nation, and therefore addresses the following appeal to the people. Ver. 8. "*Blow ye the horn at Gibeah, the trumpet at Ramah! Raise the cry at Bethaven, Behind thee, Benjamin!*" The blowing of the *shôphâr*, a far-sounding horn, or of the trumpet<sup>2</sup> (*châtsôs'râh*), was a signal by which the invasion of foes (ch. viii. 1; Jer. iv. 5, vi. 1) and other calamities (Joel. ii. 1, cf. Amos iii. 6) were announced, to give the inhabitants warning of the danger that threatened them. The words therefore imply that foes had invaded the land. *Gibeah* (of Saul; see at Josh. xviii. 28) and *Ramah* (of Samuel; see at Josh. xviii. 25) were two elevated places on the northern boundary of the tribe of Benjamin, which were well adapted for signals, on account of their lofty situation. The introduction of these particular towns, which did not belong to the tribe of Israel, but to that of Judah, is intended to intimate that the enemy has already conquered the kingdom of the ten tribes,

<sup>1</sup> It is very evident from this verse, that the feasts and the worship prescribed in the Mosaic law were observed in the kingdom of the ten tribes, at the places of worship in Bethel and Dan.

<sup>2</sup> "The *sophar* was a shepherd's horn, and was made of a carved horn; the *tuba* (*châtsôs'râh*) was made of brass or silver, and sounded either in the time of war or at festivals."—JEROME.



and has advanced to the border of that of Judah. הָרִיעַ, to make a noise, is to be understood here as relating to the alarm given by the war-signals already mentioned, as in Joel ii. 1, cf. Num. x. 9. *Bethaven* is Bethel (Beitin), as in ch. iv. 15, the seat of the idolatrous worship of the calves; and בְּיָת is to be taken in the sense of בְּיָתִית (according to Ges. § 118, 1). The difficult words, "behind thee, Benjamin," cannot indicate the situation or attitude of Benjamin, in relation to Bethel or the kingdom of Israel, or show that "the invasion is to be expected to start from Benjamin," as Simson supposes. For the latter is no more appropriate in this train of thought than a merely geographical or historical notice. The words are taken from the ancient war-song of Deborah (Judg. v. 14), but in a different sense from that in which they are used there. There they mean that Benjamin marched behind Ephraim, or joined it in attacking the foe; here, on the contrary, they mean that the foe is coming behind Benjamin—that the judgment announced has already broken out in the rear of Benjamin. There is no necessity to supply "the enemy rises" behind thee, O Benjamin, as Jerome proposes, or "the sword rages," as Hitzig suggests; but what comes behind Benjamin is implied in the words, "Blow ye the horn," etc. What these signals announce is coming after Benjamin; there is no necessity, therefore, to supply anything more than "it is," or "it comes." The prophet, for example, not only announces in ver. 8 that enemies will invade Israel, but that the hosts by which God will punish His rebellious people have already overflowed the kingdom of Israel, and are now standing upon the border of Judah, to punish this kingdom also for its sins. This is evident from vers. 9, 10, which contain the practical explanation of ver. 8.

Ver. 9. *"Ephraim will become a desert in the day of punishment: over the tribes of Israel have I proclaimed that which lasts. Ver. 10. The princes of Judah have become like boundary-movers; upon them I pour out my wrath like water."* The kingdom of Israel will entirely succumb to the punishment. It will become a desert—will be laid waste not only for a time, but permanently. The punishment with which it is threatened will be נֶאֱמָרָה. This word is to be interpreted as in Deut. xxviii. 59, where it is applied to lasting plagues, with which God will chastise the obstinate apostasy of His people. By the perfect

יְהוּדָה, what is here proclaimed is represented as a completed event, which will not be altered. *B'shibhtā*, not in or among the tribes, but according to זֶה עַמּוֹ, in ver. 5, against or over the tribes (Hitzig). Judah also will not escape the punishment of its sins. The unusual expression *massigē g'bhāl* is formed after, and to be explained from Deut. xix. 14, "Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's landmark;" or xxvii. 17, "Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark." The princes of Judah have become boundary-removers, not by hostile invasions of the kingdom of Israel (Simson); for the boundary-line between Israel and Judah was not so appointed by God, that a violation of it on the part of the princes of Judah could be reckoned a grievous crime, but by removing the boundaries of right which had been determined by God, viz. according to ch. iv. 15, by participating in the guilt of Ephraim, i.e. by idolatry, and therefore by the fact that they had removed the boundary between Jehovah and Baal, that is to say, between the one true God and idols. "If he who removes his neighbour's boundary is cursed, how much more he who removes the border of his God!" (Hengstenberg.) Upon such men the wrath of God would fall in its fullest measure. צַדִּיק, like a stream of water, so plentifully. For the figure, compare Ps. lxix. 25, lxxix. 6, Jer. x. 25. Severe judgments are thus announced to Judah, viz. those of which the Assyrians under Tiglath-pileser and Sennacherib were the instruments; but no ruin or lasting devastation is predicted, as was the case with the kingdom of Israel, which was destroyed by the Assyrians.

From these judgments Israel and Judah will not be set free, until in their distress they seek their God. This thought is expanded in the next strophe (vers. 11-15). Ver. 11. "*Ephraim is oppressed, broken in pieces by the judgment; for it has wished, has gone according to statute.*" By the participles *'āshūq* and *rātsūts*, the calamity is represented as a lasting condition, which the prophet saw in the spirit as having already begun. The two words are connected together even in Deut. xxviii. 33, to indicate the complete subjection of Israel to the power and oppression of its foes, as a punishment for falling away from the Lord. *R'tsūts mishpāt* does not mean "of broken right," or "injured in its right" (Ewald and Hitzig), but "broken in pieces by the judgment" (of God), with a *geni-*

*tivum efficientis*, like *mukkēh Elōhīm* in Isa. liii. 4. For it liked to walk according to statute. For חָלַף אֲחֵרֵי compare Jer. ii. 5 and 2 Kings xviii. 15. *Tsav* is a human statute; it stands both here and in Isa. xxviii. 10, 13, the only other passages in which it occurs, as an antithesis to the word or commandment of God. The statute intended is the one which the kingdom of Israel upheld from beginning to end, viz. the worship of the calves, that root of all the sins, which brought about the dissolution and ruin of the kingdom.

Ver. 12. "*And I am like the moth to Ephraim, and like the worm to the house of Judah.*" The moth and worm are figures employed to represent destructive powers; the moth destroying clothes (Isa. l. 9, li. 8; Ps. xxxix. 12), the worm injuring both wood and flesh. They are both connected again in Job xiii. 28, as things which destroy slowly but surely, to represent, as Calvin says, *lenta Dei judicia*. God becomes a destructive power to the sinner through the thorn of conscience, and the chastisements which are intended to effect his reformation, but which lead inevitably to his ruin when he hardens himself against them. The preaching of the law by the prophets sharpened the thorn in the conscience of Israel and Judah. The chastisement consisted in the infliction of the punishments threatened in the law, viz. in plagues and invasions of their foes.

The two kingdoms could not defend themselves against this chastisement by the help of any earthly power. Ver. 13. "*And Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah his abscess; and Ephraim went to Asshur, and sent to king Jareb (striver): but he cannot cure you, nor drive the abscess away from you.*" By the imperfects, with *Vav* rel., וַיֵּלֶךְ, וַיִּרְא, the attempts of Ephraim and Judah to save themselves from destruction are represented as the consequence of the coming of God to punish, referred to in ver. 12. Inasmuch as this is to be seen, so far as the historical fulfilment is concerned, not in the present, but in the past and future, the attempts to obtain a cure for the injuries also belong to the present (? past) and future. *Māzōr* does not mean a bandage or the cure of injuries (Ges., Dietr.), but is derived from מָצַר, to squeeze out (see Del. on Isa. i. 6), and signifies literally that which is pressed out, i.e. a festering wound, an abscess. It has this meaning not only here, but also

in Jer. xxx. 13, from which the meaning bandage has been derived. On the figure employed, viz. the disease of the body politic, see Delitzsch on Isa. i. 5, 6. That this disease is not to be sought for specially in anarchy and civil war (Hitzig), is evident from the simple fact, that Judah, which was saved from these evils, is described as being just as sick as Ephraim. The real disease of the two kingdoms was apostasy from the Lord, or idolatry with its train of moral corruption, injustice, crimes, and vices of every kind, which destroyed the vital energy and vital marrow of the two kingdoms, and generated civil war and anarchy in the kingdom of Israel. Ephraim sought for help from the Assyrians, viz. from king *Jareb*, but without obtaining it. The name *Jareb*, i.e. warrior, which occurs here and at ch. x. 6, is an epithet formed by the prophet himself, and applied to the king of Assyria, not of Egypt, as Theodoret supposes. The omission of the article from מֶלֶךְ may be explained from the fact that *Jārēbh* is, strictly speaking, an appellative, as in מֶלֶךְ לְמִנְיָאֵל in Prov. xxxi. 1. We must not supply *Y'hūdāh* as the subject to *vayyishlach*. The omission of any reference to Judah in the second half of the verse, may be accounted for from the fact that the prophecy had primrily and principally to do with Ephraim, and that Judah was only cursorily mentioned. The ἀπ. λεγ. יִנְהַי from יָנַח, in Syriac to be shy, to flee, is used with *min* in the tropical sense of removing or driving away.

No help is to be expected from Assyria, because the Lord will punish His people. Ver. 14. "*For I am like a lion to Ephraim, and like the young lion to the house of Judah: I, I tear in pieces, and go; I carry away, and there is no deliverer.*" Ver. 15. *I go, return to my place, till they repent and shall seek my face. In their affliction they will seek me early.*" For the figure of the lion, which seizes its prey, and tears it in pieces without deliverance, see ch. xiii. 7 and Isa. v. 29. שָׁחַ denotes the carrying away of booty, as in 1 Sam. xvii. 34. For the fact itself, compare Deut. xxxii. 39. The first clause of ver. 15 is still to be interpreted from the figure of the lion. As the lion withdraws into its cave, so will the Lord withdraw into His own place, viz. heaven, and deprive the Israelites of His gracious, helpful presence, until they repent, i.e. not only feel themselves guilty, but feel the guilt by bearing the punishment.

Suffering punishment awakens the need of mercy, and impels them to seek the face of the Lord. The expression, "in the distress to them," recalls לָצָרָם in Deut. iv. 30. *Shicher* is to be taken as a denom. of *shachar*, the morning dawn (ch. vi. 3), in the sense of early, *i.e.* zealously, urgently, as the play upon the word בִּשְׁחָר in ch. vi. 3 *unmistakeably* shows. For the fact itself, compare ch. ii. 9 and Deut. iv. 29, 30.

Chap. vi. 1-3. To this threat the prophet appends in the concluding strophe, both the command to return to the Lord, and the promise that the Lord will raise His smitten nation up again, and quicken them anew with His grace. The separation of these three verses from the preceding one, by the division of the chapters, is at variance with the close connection in the actual contents, which is so perfectly obvious in the allusion made in the words of ver. 1, "Come, and let us return," to those of ch. v. 15, "I will go, and return," and in מָרָה וּפְּאֵנִי (ver. 1) to the similar words in ch. v. 13b and 14. Ver. 1. "*Come, and let us return to Jehovah: for He has torn in pieces, and will heal us; He has smitten, and will bind us up.*" Ver. 2. "*He will quicken us after two days; on the third He will raise us up, that we may live before Him.*" The majority of commentators, following the example of the Chald. and Septuagint, in which לָמַד, λέγοντες, is interpolated before לָכֵן, have taken the first three verses as an appeal to return to the Lord, addressed by the Israelites in exile to one another. But it would be more simple, and more in harmony with the general style of Hosea, which is characterized by rapid transitions, to take the words as a call addressed by the prophet in the name of the Lord to the people, whom the Lord had smitten or sent into exile. The promise in ver. 3 especially is far more suitable to a summons of this kind, than to an appeal addressed by the people to one another. As the endurance of punishment impels to seek the Lord (ch. v. 15), so the motive to return to the Lord is founded upon the knowledge of the fact that the Lord can, and will, heal the wounds which He inflicts. The preterite *târaph*, as compared with the future *'etrôph* in ch. v. 14, presupposes that the punishment has already begun. The following וְ is also a preterite with the *Vav consec.* omitted. The Assyrian cannot heal (ch. v. 13); but the Lord, who manifested Himself as Israel's physician in the time of Moses

(Ex. xv. 26), and promised His people healing in the future also (Deut. xxxii. 39), surely can. The allusion in the word **וְחָיָה** to this passage of Deuteronomy, is placed beyond all doubt by ver. 2. The words, "He revives after two days," etc., are merely a special application of the general declaration, "I kill, and make alive" (Deut. xxxii. 39), to the particular case in hand. What the Lord there promises to all His people, He will also fulfil upon the ten tribes of Israel. By the definition "after two days," and "on the third day," the speedy and certain revival of Israel is set before them. Two and three days are very short periods of time; and the linking together of two numbers following one upon the other, expresses the certainty of what is to take place within this space of time, just as in the so-called numerical sayings in Amos i. 3, Job v. 19, Prov. vi. 16, xxx. 15, 18, in which the last and greater number expresses the highest or utmost that is generally met with. **וְחָיָה**, to raise the dead (Job xiv. 12; Ps. lxxxviii. 11; Isa. xxvi. 14, 19). "That we may live before Him:" i.e. under His sheltering protection and grace (cf. Gen. xvii. 18). The earlier Jewish and Christian expositors have taken the numbers, "after two days, and on the third day," chronologically. The Rabbins consequently suppose the prophecy to refer either to the three captivities, the Egyptian, the Babylonian, and the Roman, which has not ended yet; or to the three periods of the temple of Solomon, of that of Zerubbabel, and of the one to be erected by the Messiah. Many of the fathers, on the other hand, and many of the early Lutheran commentators, have found in them a prediction of the death of Christ and His resurrection on the third day. Compare, for example, *Calovii Bibl. illustr. ad h. l.*, where this allusion is defended by a long series of undeniably weak arguments, and where a fierce attack is made, not only upon Calvin, who understood these words as "referring to the liberation of Israel from captivity, and the restoration of the church after two days, i.e. in a very short time;" but also upon Grotius, who found, in addition to the immediate historical allusion to the Israelites, whom God would soon liberate from their death-like misery after their conversion, a foretype, in consequence of a special divine indication, of the time "within which Christ would recover His life, and the church its hope." But any direct allusion in the hope here uttered to the death and

resurrection of Christ, is proved to be untenable by the simple words and their context. The words primarily hold out nothing more than the quickening of Israel out of its death-like state of rejection from the face of God, and that in a very short period after its conversion to the Lord. This restoration to life cannot indeed be understood as referring to the return of the exiles to their earthly fatherland; or, at all events, it cannot be restricted to this. It does not occur till after the conversion of Israel to the Lord its God, on the ground of faith in the redemption effected through the atoning death of Christ, and His resurrection from the grave; so that the words of the prophet may be applied to this great fact in the history of salvation, but without its being either directly or indirectly predicted. Even the resurrection of the dead is not predicted, but simply the spiritual and moral restoration of Israel to life, which no doubt has for its necessary complement the reawakening of the physically dead. And, in this sense, our passage may be reckoned among the prophetic utterances which contain the germ of the hope of a life after death, as in Isa. xxvi. 19-21, and in the vision of Ezekiel in Ezek. xxxvii. 1-14.

That it did not refer to this in its primary sense, and so far as its historical fulfilment was concerned, is evident from the following verse. Ver. 3. *"Let us therefore know, hunt after the knowledge of Jehovah. His rising is fixed like the morning dawn, that He may come to us like the rain, and moisten the earth like the latter rain."* לָכֵן וְנִשְׁׁבָּה וְנִדְעָה נֵר corresponds to אֶת־יְהוָה נִדְעָה in ver. 1. The object to נִדְעָה is also אֶת־יְהוָה, and נִדְעָה is merely strengthened by the addition of לִדְעָה. The knowledge of Jehovah, which they would hunt after, i.e. strive zealously to obtain, is a practical knowledge, consisting in the fulfilment of the divine commandments, and in growth in the love of God with all the heart. This knowledge produces fruit. The Lord will rise upon Israel like the morning dawn, and come down upon it like fertilizing rain. מוֹצֵאִי, His (i.e. Jehovah's) rising, is to be explained from the figure of the dawn (for מוֹצֵאִי applied to the rising of the sun, see Gen. xix. 23 and Ps. xix. 7). The dawn is mentioned instead of the sun, as the herald of the dawning day of salvation (compare Isa. lviii. 8 and lx. 2). This salvation which dawns when the Lord appears, is represented in the last clause as a shower of rain that fertilizes the land. יוֹרֵה is

hardly a *kal* participle, but rather the imperfect *hiphil* in the sense of sprinkling. In Deut. xi. 14 (cf. xxviii. 12 and Lev. xxvi. 4, 5), the rain, or the early and latter rain, is mentioned among the blessings which the Lord will bestow upon His people, when they serve Him with all the heart and soul. This promise the Lord will so fulfil in the case of His newly quickened nation, that He Himself will refresh it like a fertilizing rain. This will take place through the Messiah, as Ps. lxxii. 6 and 2 Sam. xxiii. 4 clearly show.

## II. THE RIPENESS OF ISRAEL FOR THE JUDGMENT OF DESTRUCTION.—CHAP. VI. 4-XI. 11.

Just as, in the middle section of the first part of our book (ch. ii. 2-23), the symbolical announcements of judgment contained in ch. i. were more fully elaborated and explained; so again, in the second part, after the shorter description of the corruption and culpability of Israel contained in ch. iv. v., we find in the second or middle section, viz. ch. vi. 4-xi. 11, a longer account both of the religious apostasy and moral corruption which have become so injurious, and also of the judgment about to fall upon the sinful kingdom and people. In this, the condemnation of sin and threatening of punishment follow one another throughout; but in such a way that in this longer exposition the progressive development of these truths is clearly indicated in the fact, that in the first section (ch. vi. 4-vii. 16) the description of the religious and moral degradation of the nation and its princes prevails; in the second (ch. viii. 1-ix. 9) the threatening of judgment comes into the foreground; and in the third (ch. ix. 10-xi. 11) evidence is adduced, how, from time immemorial, Israel has resisted the gracious guidance of God, so that nothing but the compassion of God can preserve it from utter annihilation. Each of these divisions may be subdivided again into three strophes.

### *The Incurableness of the Corruption.*—Chap. vi. 4-vii. 16.

The prophet's address commences afresh, as in ch. ii. 4, without any introduction, with the denunciation of the incurability of the Israelites. Vers. 4-11 form the first strophe.



Ver. 4. "*What shall I do to thee, Ephraim? what shall I do to thee, Judah? for your love is like the morning cloud, and like the dew which quickly passes away.*" That this verse is not to be taken in connection with the preceding one, as it has been by Luther ("how shall I do such good to thee?") and by many of the earlier expositors, is evident from the substance of the verse itself. For *'āsāh*, in the sense of doing good, is neither possible in itself, nor reconcilable with the explanatory clause which follows. The *chesed*, which is like the morning cloud, cannot be the grace of God; for a morning cloud that quickly vanishes away, is, according to ch. xiii. 3, a figurative representation of that which is evanescent and perishable. The verse does not contain an answer from Jehovah, "who neither receives nor repels the penitent, because though they love God it is only with fickleness," as Hitzig supposes; but rather the thought, that God has already tried all kinds of punishment to bring the people back to fidelity to Himself, but all in vain (cf. Isa. i. 5, 6), because the piety of Israel is as evanescent and transient as a morning cloud, which is dispersed by the rising sun. Judging from the *chesed* in ver. 6, *chasd'khem* is to be understood as referring to good-will towards other men flowing out of love to God (see at ch. iv. 1).

Ver. 5. "*Therefore have I hewn by the prophets, slain them by the words of my mouth: and my judgment goeth forth as light.*" *'Al-kēn*, therefore, because your love vanishes again and again, God must perpetually punish. כִּי יַחַבֵּן does not mean to strike in among the prophets (Hitzig, after the LXX., Syr., and others); but כִּי is instrumental, as in Isa. x. 15, and *châtsabh* signifies to hew, not merely to hew off, but to hew out or carve. The *n'bhî'im* cannot be false prophets, on account of the parallel "by the words of my mouth," but must be the true prophets. Through them God had hewed or carved the nation, or, as Jerome and Luther render it, *dolavi*, i.e. worked it like a piece of hard wood, in other words, had tried to improve it, and shape it into a holy nation, answering to its true calling. "Slain by the words of my mouth," which the prophets had spoken; i.e. not merely caused death and destruction to be proclaimed to them, but suspended judgment and death over them—as, for example, by Elijah—since there dwells in the word of God the power to kill and to make alive (compare Isa. xi. 4, xlix. 2). The

last clause, according to the Masoretic pointing and division of the words, does not yield any appropriate meaning.  $\text{מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ}$  could only be the judgments inflicted upon the nation; but neither the singular suffix  $\text{ךָ}$  for  $\text{כֶּם}$  (ver. 4), nor  $\text{אֹרֶךְ}$ , with the singular verb under the  $\text{נ}$  *simil.* omitted before  $\text{אֹרֶךְ}$ , suits this explanation. For  $\text{אֹרֶךְ}$  cannot mean "to go forth to the light;" nor can  $\text{אֹרֶךְ}$  stand for  $\text{אֹרֶךְ}$ . We must therefore regard the reading expressed by the ancient versions,<sup>1</sup> viz.  $\text{כְּאֹרֶךְ כְּנֶגְדִי}$ , "my judgment goeth forth like light," as the original one. My penal judgment went forth like the light (the sun); *i.e.* the judgment inflicted upon the sinners was so obvious, so conspicuous (clear as the sun), that every one ought to have observed it and laid it to heart (cf. Zeph. iii. 5). The Masoretic division of the words probably arose simply from an unsuitable reminiscence of Ps. xxxvii. 6.

The reason why God was obliged to punish in this manner is given in the following verses. Ver. 6. "*For I take pleasure in love, and not in sacrifices; and in the knowledge of God more than in burnt-offerings.*" Ver. 7. "*But they have transgressed the covenant like Adam: there have they acted treacherously towards me.*" *Chesed* is love to one's neighbour, manifesting itself in righteousness, love which has its roots in the knowledge of God, and therefore is connected with "the knowledge of God" here as in ch. iv. 1. For the thought itself, compare the remarks on the similar declaration made by the prophet Samuel in 1 Sam. xv. 22; and for parallels as to the fact, see Isa. i. 11-17, Mic. vi. 8, Ps. xl. 7-9, and Ps. l. 8 sqq., in all which passages it is not sacrifices in themselves, but simply the heartless sacrifices with which the wicked fancied they could cover their sins, that are here rejected as displeasing to God, and as abominations in His eyes. This is apparent also from the antithesis in ver. 7, viz. the reproof of their transgression of the covenant.  $\text{הֵמָּה}$  (they) are Israel and Judah, not the priests, whose sins are first referred to in ver. 9.  $\text{כְּאָדָם}$ , not "after the manner of men," or "like ordinary men,"—for this explanation would only be admissible if  $\text{הֵמָּה}$  referred to the priests or prophets, or if a contrast were drawn between the rulers

<sup>1</sup> The Vulgate in some of the ancient MSS. has also *judicium meum*, instead of the *judicia tua* of the Sixtina. See Kennicott, *Diss. gener. ed.* Bruns. p. 55 sqq.

and others, as in Ps. lxxxii. 7,—but “like Adam,” who transgressed the commandment of God, that he should not eat of the tree of knowledge. This command was actually a covenant, which God made with him, since the object of it was the preservation of Adam in vital fellowship with the Lord, as was the case with the covenant that God made with Israel (see Job xxxi. 33, and Delitzsch’s Commentary). The local expression “there,” points to the place where the faithless apostasy had occurred, as in Ps. xiv. 5. This is not more precisely defined, but refers no doubt to Bethel as the scene of the idolatrous worship. There is no foundation for the temporal rendering “then.”

The prophet cites a few examples in proof of this faithlessness in the two following verses. Ver. 8. *“Gilead is a city of evil-doers, trodden with blood.”* Ver. 9. *“And like the lurking of the men of the gangs is the covenant of the priests; along the way they murder even to Sichem: yea, they have committed infamy.”* Gilead is not a city, for no such city is mentioned in the Old Testament, and its existence cannot be proved from Judg. xii. 7 and x. 17, any more than from Gen xxxi. 48, 49,<sup>1</sup> but it is the name of a district, as it is everywhere else; and here in all probability it stands, as it very frequently does, for the whole of the land of Israel to the east of the Jordan. Hosea calls Gilead a city of evil-doers, as being a rendezvous for wicked men, to express the thought that the whole land was as full of evil-doers as a city is of men. עֲקָבָה: a denom. of עָקַב, a footstep, signifying marked with traces, full of traces of

<sup>1</sup> The statement of the *Onomast.* (s. v. Γαλαάδ), that there is also a city called Galaad, situated in the mountain which Galaad the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, took from the Amorite, and that of Jerome, “from which mountain the city built in it derived its name, viz. that which was taken,” etc., furnish no proof of the existence of a city called *Gilead* in the time of the Israelites; since Eusebius and Jerome have merely inferred the existence of such a city from statements in the Old Testament, more especially from the passage quoted by them just before, viz. Jer. xxii. 6, *Galaad tu mihi initium Libani*, taken in connection with Num. xxxii. 39–42, as the words “which Gilead took” clearly prove. And with regard to the ruined cities *Jelaad* and *Jelaud*, which are situated, according to Burckhardt (pp. 599, 600), upon the mountain called Jebel Jelaad or Jelaud, it is not known that they date from antiquity at all. Burckhardt gives no description of them, and does not even appear to have visited the ruins.

blood, which are certainly not to be understood as referring to idolatrous sacrifices, as Schmieder imagines, but which point to murder and bloodshed. It is quite as arbitrary, however, on the part of Hitzig to connect it with the murder of Zechariah, or a massacre associated with it, as it is on the part of Jerome and others to refer it to the deeds of blood by which Jehu secured the throne. The bloody deeds of Jehu took place in Jezreel and Samaria (2 Kings ix. x.), and it was only by a false interpretation of the epithet applied to Shallum, viz. *Ben-yābhēsh*, as signifying citizens of Jabesh, that Hitzig was able to trace a connection between it and Gilead.—Ver. 9. In these crimes the priests take the lead. Like highway robbers, they form themselves into gangs for the purpose of robbing travellers and putting them to death. *חֲכִי*, so written instead of *חֲכִיָּה* (Ewald, § 16, *b*), is an irregularly formed infinitive for *חֲכִיָּה* (Ewald, § 238, *e*). *'Ish g'dūdīm*, a man of fighting-bands, i.e. in actual fact a highway robber, who lies in wait for travellers.<sup>1</sup> The company (*chebher*, gang) of the priests resembled such a man. They murder on the way (*derekh*, an adverbial accusative) to Sichem. *Sichem*, a place on Mount Ephraim, between Ebal and Gerizim, the present Nablus (see at Josh. xvii. 7), was set apart as a city of refuge and a Levitical city (Josh. xx. 7, xxi. 21); from which the more recent commentators have inferred that priests from Sichem, using the privileges of their city to cover crimes of their own, committed acts of murder, either upon fugitives who were hurrying thither, and whom they put to death at the command of the leading men who were ill-disposed towards them (Ewald), or upon other travellers, either from avarice or simple cruelty. But, apart from the fact that the Levitical cities are here confounded with the priests' cities (for Sichem was only a Levitical city, and not a priests' city at all), this conclusion is founded upon the

<sup>1</sup> The first hemistich has been entirely misunderstood by the LXX., who have confounded *חֲכִי* with *חֲכִיָּה*, and rendered the clause *καὶ ἡ ἰσχὺς σου ἀντὶ τοῦ πειρατοῦ ἐκρυψαν* (*חֲכִי* or *חֲכִיָּה* instead of *חֲכִי*) *ἐπεὶ δὲ*. Jerome has also rendered *חֲכִי* strangely, *et quasi fauces (חֲכִי) virorum latronum particeps sacerdotum*. Luther, on the other hand, has caught the sense quite correctly on the whole, and simply rendered it rather freely: "And the priests with their mobs are like footpads, who lie in wait for people."

erroneous assumption, that the priests who were taken by Jeroboam from the people generally, had special places of abode assigned them, such as the law had assigned for the Levitical priests. The way to Sichem is mentioned as a place of murders and bloody deeds, because the road from Samaria the capital, and in fact from the northern part of the kingdom generally, to Bethel the principal place of worship belonging to the kingdom of the ten tribes, lay through this city. Pilgrims to the feasts for the most part took this road; and the priests, who were taken from the dregs of the people, appear to have lain in wait for them, either to rob, or, in case of resistance, to murder. The following *נִי* carries it still higher, and adds another crime to the murderous deeds. *Zimmâh* most probably refers to an unnatural crime, as in Lev. xviii. 17, xix. 29.

Thus does Israel heap up abomination upon abomination. Ver. 10. "*In the house of Israel I saw a horrible thing: there Ephraim practises whoredom: Israel has defiled itself.*" The house of Israel is the kingdom of the ten tribes. *שְׁעָרֵיהֶּ*, a horrible thing, signifies abominations and crimes of every kind. In the second hemistich, *z'nûth*, i.e. spiritual and literal whoredom, is singled out as the principal sin. *Ephraim* is not the name of a tribe here, as Simson supposes, but is synonymous with the parallel *Israel*.

In conclusion, Judah is mentioned again, that it may not regard itself as better or less culpable. Ver. 11. "*Also, O Judah, a harvest is appointed for thee, when I turn the imprisonment of my people.*" Judah stands at the head as an absolute noun, and is then defined by the following *לָךְ*. The subject to *shâth* cannot be either Israel or Jehovah. The first, which Hitzig adopts, "Israel has prepared a harvest for thee," does not supply a thought at all in harmony with the connection; and the second is precluded by the fact that Jehovah Himself is the speaker. *Shâth* is used here in a passive sense, as in Job xxxviii. 11 (cf. Ges. § 137, 3\*). *קָצִיר*, harvest, is a figurative term for the judgment, as in Joel iv. 13, Jer. li. 33. As Judah has sinned as well as Israel, it cannot escape the punishment (cf. ch. v. 5, 14). *שׁוּב נְשׁוּבָה* never means to bring back the captives; but in every passage in which it occurs it simply means to turn the captivity, and that in the figurative sense of *restitutio in integrum* (see at Deut. xxx. 3). '*Ammî*, my people,

i.e. the people of Jehovah, is not Israel of the ten tribes, but the covenant nation as a whole. Consequently *sh'bhūth 'ammī* is the misery into which Israel (of the twelve tribes) had been brought, through its falling away from God, not the Assyrian or Babylonian exile, but the misery brought about by the sins of the people. God could only avert this by means of judgments, through which the ungodly were destroyed and the penitent converted. Consequently the following is the thought which we obtain from the verse: "When God shall come to punish, that He may root out ungodliness, and bring back His people to their true destination, Judah will also be visited with the judgment." We must not only reject the explanation adopted by Rosenmüller, Maurer, and Umbreit, "when Israel shall have received its chastisement, and be once more received and restored by the gracious God, the richly merited punishment shall come upon Judah also," but that of Schmieder as well, who understands by the "harvest" a harvest of joy. They are both founded upon the false interpretation of *shūbh sh'bhūth*, as signifying the bringing back of the captives; and in the first there is the arbitrary limitation of *'ammī* to the ten tribes. Our verse says nothing as to the question when and how God will turn the captivity of the people and punish Judah; this must be determined from other passages, which announce the driving into exile of both Israel and Judah, and the eventual restoration of those who are converted to the Lord their God. The complete turning of the captivity of the covenant nation will not take place till Israel as a nation shall be converted to Christ its Saviour.

Chap. vii. In the first strophe (vers. 1-7) the exposure of the moral depravity of Israel is continued. Ver. 1. *"When I heal Israel, the iniquity of Ephraim reveals itself, and the wickedness of Samaria: for they practise deceit; and the thief cometh, the troop of robbers plundereth without."* Ver. 2. *"And they say not in their heart, I should remember all their wickedness. Now their deeds have surrounded them, they have occurred before my face."* Ver. 3. *"They delight the king with their wickedness, and princes with their lies."* As the dangerous nature of a wound is often first brought out by the attempt to heal it, so was the corruption of Israel only brought truly to light by the effort to stem it. The first hemistich of ver. 1 is not to be referred to the future,

nor is the healing to be understood as signifying punishment, as Hitzig supposes; but the allusion is to the attempts made by God to put a stop to the corruption, partly by the preaching of repentance and the reproofs of the prophets, and partly by chastisements designed to promote reformation. The words contain no threatening of punishment, but a picture of the moral corruption that had become incurable. Here again Ephraim is not the particular tribe, but is synonymous with Israel, the people or kingdom of the ten tribes; and Samaria is especially mentioned in connection with it, as the capital and principal seat of the corruption of morals, just as Judah and Jerusalem are frequently classed together by the prophets. The lamentation concerning the incurability of the kingdom is followed by an explanatory notice of the sins and crimes that are openly committed. *Sheqer*, lying, *i.e.* deception both in word and deed towards God and man, theft and highway robbery, and not fear of the vengeance of God. "*Accedit ad hæc facinora securitas eorum ineffabilis*" (Marck). They do not consider that God will remember their evil deeds, and punish them; they are surrounded by them on all sides, and perform them without shame or fear before the face of God Himself. These sins delight both king and prince. To such a depth have even the rulers of the nation, who ought to practise justice and righteousness, fallen, that they not only fail to punish the sins, but take pleasure in their being committed.

To this there is added the passion with which the people make themselves slaves to idolatry, and their rulers give themselves up to debauchery (vers. 4-7). Ver. 4. "*They are all adulterers, like an oven heated by the baker, who leaves off stirring from the kneading of the dough until its leavening.*" Ver. 5. "*In the day of our king the princes are made sick with the heat of wine: he has stretched out his hand with the scornors.*" Ver. 6. "*For they have brought their heart into their ambush, as into the oven; the whole night their baker sleeps; in the morning it burns like flaming fire.*" Ver. 7. "*They are all red-hot like the oven, and consume their judges: all their kings have fallen; none among them calls to me.*" "All" (*kullâm*: ver. 4) does not refer to the king and princes, but to the whole nation. 𐤒𐤍 is spiritual adultery, apostasy from the Lord; and literal adultery is only so far to be thought of, that the worship of Baal promoted licentiousness.

In this passionate career the nation resembles a furnace which a baker heats in the evening, and leaves burning all night while the dough is leavening, and then causes to burn with a still brighter flame in the morning, when the dough is ready for baking. בַּעֲרָה מֵאֶפֶה, burning from the baker, *i.e.* heated by the baker. בַּעֲרָה is accentuated as *mileh*, either because the Masoretes took offence at מַעֲרִיר being construed as a feminine (Ges. *Lehrgeb.* p. 546; Ewald, *Gramm.* p. 449, note 1), or because *tiphchah* could not occupy any other place in the short space between *zakeph* and *athnach* (Hitzig). הַעֲרִיר, *excitare*, here in the sense of stirring. On the use of the participle in the place of the infinitive, with verbs of beginning and ending, see Ewald, § 298, *b*.

Both king and princes are addicted to debauchery (ver. 5). "The day of our king" is either the king's birthday, or the day when he ascended the throne, on either of which he probably gave a feast to his nobles. יוֹם is taken most simply as an adverbial *accus. loci*. On this particular day the princes drink to such an extent, that they become ill with the heat of the wine. הִחֲלִי, generally to make ill, here to make one's self ill. Hitzig follows the ancient versions, in deriving it from חָלַל, and taking it as equivalent to הִחֲלִי, "they begin," which gives a very insipid meaning. The difficult expression מְשִׁיב יָדוֹ אֶת־לֵב, "he draws his hand with the scoffers," can hardly be understood in any other way than that suggested by Gesenius (*Lex.*), "the king goes about with scoffers," *i.e.* makes himself familiar with them, so that we may compare שָׁחַת יָדוֹ עִם (Ex. xxiii. 1). The scoffers are drunkards, just as in Prov. xx. 1 wine is directly called a scoffer. In vers. 6, 7, the thought of the fourth verse is carried out still further. כִּי introduces the explanation and ground of the simile of the furnace; for ver. 5 is subordinate to the main thought, and to be taken as a parenthetical remark. The words from מִי קָרְבִי to כִּי בָּאֲרָבָם form one sentence. קָרַב is construed with לִי *loci*, as in Judg. xix. 13, Ps. xci. 10: they have brought their heart near, brought them into their craftiness. "Like a furnace" (כְּתַנּוּר) contains an abridged simile. But it is not their *heart* itself which is here compared to a furnace (their heart = themselves), in the sense of "burning like a flaming furnace with base desires," as Gesenius supposes; for the idea of bringing a furnace into an *'orebh* would be



unsuitable and unintelligible. "The furnace is rather *'orbām* (their ambush), that which they have in common, that which keeps them together; whilst the fuel is *libbām*, their own disposition" (Hitzig). Their baker is the *machinator doli*, who kindles the fire in them, *i.e.* in actual fact, not some person or other who instigates a conspiracy, but the passion of idolatry. This sleeps through the night, *i.e.* it only rests till the opportunity and time have arrived for carrying out the evil thoughts of their heart, or until the evil thoughts of the heart have become ripe for execution. This time is described in harmony with the figure, as the morning, in which the furnace burns up into bright flames (סִיח points to the more remote *tannūr* as the subject). In ver. 7 the figure is carried back to the literal fact. With the words, "they are all hot as a furnace," the expression in ver. 4, "adulterous like a furnace," is resumed; and now the fruit of this conduct is mentioned, *viz.* "they devour their judges, cast down their kings." By the judges we are not to understand the *sārīm* of ver. 5, who are mentioned along with the king as the supreme guardians of the law; but the kings themselves are intended, as the administrators of justice, as in ch. xiii. 10, where *shōph'īm* is also used as synonymous with מִשְׁפָּט, and embraces both king and princes. The clause, "all their kings are fallen," adds no new feature to what precedes, and does not affirm that kings have also fallen in addition to or along with the judges; but it sums up what has been stated already, for the purpose of linking on the remark, that no one calls to the Lord concerning the fall of the kings. The suffix בָּהֶם does not refer to the fallen kings, but to the nation in its entirety, *i.e.* to those who have devoured their judges. The thought is this: in the passion with which all are inflamed for idolatry, and with which the princes revel with the kings, they give no such heed to the inevitable consequences of their ungodly conduct, as that any one reflects upon the fall of the kings, or perceives that Israel has forsaken the way which leads to salvation, and is plunging headlong into the abyss of destruction, so as to return to the Lord, who alone can help and save. The prophet has here the times after Jeroboam II. in his mind, when Zechariah was overthrown by Shallum, Shallum by Menahem, and Menahem the son of Pekahiah by Pekah, and that in the most rapid succession (2 Kings xv. 10, 14, 25),

together with the eleven years' anarchy between Zechariah and Shallum (see at 2 Kings xv. 8-12). At the same time, the expression, "all their kings have fallen," shows clearly, not only that the words are not to be limited to these events, but embrace all the earlier revolutions, but also and still more clearly, that there is no foundation whatever for the widespread historical interpretation of these verses, as relating to a conspiracy against the then reigning king Zechariah, or Shallum, or Pekahiah, according to which the baker is either Menahem (Hitzig) or Pekah (Schmidt).

In the next strophe (vers. 8-16) the prophecy passes from the internal corruption of the kingdom of the ten tribes to its worthless foreign policy, and the injurious attitude which it had assumed towards the heathen nations, and unfolds the disastrous consequences of such connections. Ver. 8. *"Ephraim, it mixes itself among the nations; Ephraim has become a cake not turned."* Ver. 9. *"Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not; grey hair is also sprinkled upon him, and he knoweth it not."* מִבֹּלֵל, from בָּלַל, to mix or commingle, is not a future in the sense of "it will be dispersed among the Gentiles;" for, according to the context, the reference is not to the punishment of the dispersion of Israel among the nations, but to the state in which Israel then was. The Lord had separated Israel from the nations, that it might be holy to Him (Lev. xx. 24, 26). As Balaam said of it, it was to be a people dwelling alone (Num. xxiii. 9). But in opposition to this object of its divine calling, the ten tribes had mingled with the nations, i.e. with the heathen, learned their works, and served their idols (cf. Ps. cvi. 35, 36). The mingling with the nations consisted in the adoption of heathen ways, not in the penetration of the heathen into Israelitish possessions (Hitzig), nor merely in the alliances which it formed with heathen nations. For these were simply the consequence of inward apostasy from its God, of that inward mixing with the nature of heathenism which had already taken place. Israel had thereby become a cake not turned. מֵצָה, a cake baked upon hot ashes or red-hot stones, which, if it be not turned, is burned at the bottom, and not baked at all above. The meaning of this figure is explained by ver. 9. As the fire will burn an ash-cake when it is left unturned, so have foreigners consumed the strength of Israel,

partly by devastating wars, and partly by the heathenish nature which has penetrated into Israel in their train. "Greyiness is also sprinkled upon it;" i.e. the body politic, represented as one person, is already covered with traces of hoary old age, and is ripening for destruction. The object to *לֹא יָדָע* may easily be supplied from the previous clauses, namely, that strangers devour its strength, and it is growing old. The rendering *non sapit* is precluded by the emphatic *וְיָדָע*, and he knoweth it not, i.e. does not perceive the decay of his strength.

Ver. 10. "*And the pride of Israel beareth witness to his face, and they are not converted to Jehovah their God, and for all this they seek Him not.*" The first clause is repeated from ch. v. 5. The testimony which the pride of Israel, i.e. Jehovah, bore to its face, consisted in the weakening and wasting away of the kingdom as described in ver. 9. But with all this, they do not turn to the Lord who could save them, but seek help from their natural foes.

Ver. 11. "*And Ephraim has become like a simple dove without understanding; they have called Egypt, they are gone to Asshur.*" Ver. 12. "*As they go, I spread my net over them; I bring them down like fowls of the heaven; I will chastise them, according to the tidings to their assembly.*" The perfects in ver. 11 describe the conduct of Israel as an accomplished fact, and this is represented by *וְיָדָע* as the necessary consequence of its obstinate impenitence. The point of comparison between Israel and the simple dove, is not that the dove misses its proper dwelling and resting-place, and therefore goes fluttering about (Ewald); nor that, in trying to escape from the hawk, it flies into the net of the bird-catcher (Hitzig); but that when flying about in search of food, it does not observe the net that is spread for it (Rosenmüller). *לֹא יָדָע* is to be taken as a predicate to *Ephraim* in spite of the accents, and not to *yōnāh phōthāh* (a simple dove), since *phōthāh* does not require either strengthening or explaining. Thus does Ephraim seek help from Egypt and Assyria. These words do not refer to the fact that there were two parties in the nation—an Assyrian and an Egyptian. Nor do they mean that the whole nation applied at one time to Egypt to get rid of Asshur, and at another time to Asshur to escape from Egypt. "The situation is rather this: the people being sorely pressed by Asshur, at one time seek help from

Egypt against Asshur; whilst at another they try to secure the friendship of the latter" (Hengstenberg, *Christology*, i. p. 164 transl.). For what threatened Israel was the burden of the "king of princes" (ch. viii. 10), *i.e.* the king of Asshur. And this they tried to avert partly by their coquettish arts (ch. viii. 9), and partly by appealing to the help of Egypt; and while doing so, they did not observe that they had fallen into the net of destruction, viz. the power of Assyria. In this net will the Lord entangle them as a punishment. As they go thither, God will spread His net over them like a bird-catcher, and bring them down to the earth like flying birds, *i.e.* bring them down from the open air, that is to say, from freedom, into the net of captivity, or exile. מִסִּירָם, a rare *hiphil* formation with *Yod mobile*, as in Prov. iv. 25 (see Ewald, § 131, c). "According to the tidings (announcement) to their assembly:" *i.e.* in accordance with the threatening already contained in the law (Lev. xxvi. 14 sqq.; Deut. xxviii. 15 sqq.), and repeatedly uttered to the congregation by the prophets, of the judgments that should fall upon the rebellious, which threatening would now be fulfilled upon Ephraim.

Ver. 13. "*Woe to them! for they have flown from me; devastation to them! for they have fallen away from me. I would redeem them, but they speak lies concerning me.*" Ver. 14. "*They did not cry to me in their heart, but howl upon their beds; they crowd together for corn and new wine, and depart against me.*"

The Lord, thinking of the chastisement, exclaims, Woe to them, because they have fled from Him! *Nādad*, which is applied to the flying of birds, points back to the figures employed in vers. 11, 12. *Shōd*, used as an exclamation, gives the literal explanation of 'ōi (woe). The imperfect 'ephdēm cannot be taken as referring to the redemption out of Egypt, because it does not stand for the preterite. It is rather voluntative or optative. "I would (should like to) redeem them (still); but they say I cannot and will not do it." These are the lies which they utter concerning Jehovah, partly with their mouths and partly by their actions, namely, in the fact that they do not seek help from Him, as is explained in ver. 14. They cry to the Lord; yet it does not come from the heart, but (עַל אַחֲרֵי כֵן) they howl (הִלְלוּ), cf. Ges. § 70, 2, note) upon their beds, in unbelieving despair at the distress that has come upon them.

What follows points to this. *Hithgôrêr*, to assemble, or crowd together (Ps. lvi. 7, lix. 4; Isa. liv. 15); here to gather in troops or crowd together for corn and new wine, because their only desire is to fill their belly. Thus they depart from God. The construction of סִיר with בָּ, instead of with בֵּן or בְּאַחֲרָי, is a pregnant one: to depart and turn against God.

Vers. 15, 16. Yet Jehovah has done still more for Israel. Ver. 15. "*And I have instructed, have strengthened their arms, and they think evil against me.*" Ver. 16. "*They turn, but not upwards: they have become like a false bow. Their princes will fall by the sword, for the defiance of their tongue: this is their derision in the land of Egypt.*" יָפַר here is not to chastise, but to instruct, so that יְרֵעָתָם (their arms) is to be taken as the object to both verbs. Instructing the arms, according to the analogy of Ps. xviii. 35, is equivalent to showing where and how strength is to be acquired. And the Lord has not contented Himself with merely instructing. He has also strengthened their arms, and given them power to fight, and victory over their foes (cf. 2 Kings xiv. 25, 26). And yet they think evil of Him; not by speaking lies (ver. 13), but by falling away from Him, by their idolatrous calf-worship, by which they rob the Lord of the glory due to Him alone, practically denying His true divinity. This attitude towards the Lord is summed up in two allegorical sentences in ver. 16, and the ruin of their princes is foretold. They turn, or turn round, but not upwards (עַל, an adverb, or a substantive signifying height, as in ch. xi. 7, 2 Sam. xxiii. 1, not "the Most High," i.e. God, although turning upwards is actually turning to God). From the fact that with all their turning about they do not turn upwards, they have become like a treacherous bow, the string of which has lost its elasticity, so that the arrows do not hit the mark (cf. Ps. lxxviii. 57). And thus Israel also fails to reach its destination. Therefore its princes shall fall. The *princes* are mentioned as the originators of the enmity against God, and all the misery into which they have plunged the people and kingdom. זַם, fury, here defiance or rage. Defiance of tongue the princes showed in the lies which they uttered concerning Jehovah (ver. 13), and with which they blasphemed in a daring manner the omnipotence and faithfulness of the Lord. יָרָם stands, according to a dialectical difference in the mode of pronuncia-

tion, for נָפַד, not for נָסָה (Ewald, § 183, a). This, namely their falling by the sword, will be for a derision to them in the land of Egypt: not because they will fall in Egypt, or perish by the sword of the Egyptians; but because they put their trust in Egypt, the derision of Egypt will come upon them when they are overthrown (cf. Isa. xxx. 3, 5).

*The Judgment consequent upon Apostasy.—*

Chap. viii.—ix. 9.

The coming judgment, viz. the destruction of the kingdom of the ten tribes, is predicted in three strophes, containing a fresh enumeration of the sins of Israel (ch. viii. 1–7), a reference to the fall of the kingdom, which is already about to commence (vers. 8–14), and a warning against false security (ch. ix. 1–9).

Ch. viii. 1–7. The prophecy rises with a vigorous swing, as in ch. v. 8, to the prediction of judgment. Ver. 1. *“The trumpet to thy mouth! Like an eagle upon the house of Jehovah! Because they transgressed my covenant, and trespassed against my law.”* Ver. 2. *To me will they cry: My God, we know Thee, we Israel!”* The first sentence of ver. 1 is an exclamation, and therefore has no verb. The summons issues from Jehovah, as the suffixes in the last sentences show, and is addressed to the prophet, who is to blow the trumpet, as the herald of Jehovah, and give the people tidings of the approaching judgment (see at ch. v. 8). The second sentence gives the alarming message to be delivered: like an eagle comes the foe, or the judgment upon the house of Jehovah. The simile of the eagle, that shoots down upon its prey with the rapidity of lightning, points back to the threat of Moses in Deut. xxviii. 49. The *“house of Jehovah”* is neither the temple at Jerusalem (Jerome, Theod., Cyr.), the introduction of which here would be at variance with the context; nor the principal temple of Samaria, with the fall of which the whole kingdom would be ruined (Ewald, Sims.), since the temples erected for the calf-worship at Dan and Bethel are called *Bēth bāmōth*, not *Bēth Y’hōvāh*; nor even the land of Jehovah, either here or at ch. ix. 15 (Hitzig), for a land is not a house; but Israel was the house of Jehovah, as being a portion of the congregation of the Lord.

as in ch. ix. 15, Num. xii. 7, Jer. xii. 7, Zech. ix. 8; cf. *ὁκνος Θεοῦ* in Heb. iii. 6 and 1 Tim. iii. 15. The occasion of the judgment was the transgression of the covenant and law of the Lord, which is more particularly described in ver. 4. In this distress they will call for help to Jehovah: "My God (*i.e.* each individual will utter this cry), we know Thee!" *Israel* is in apposition to the subject implied in the verb. They know Jehovah, so far as He has revealed Himself to the whole nation of Israel; and the name *Israel* is in itself a proof that they belong to the people of God.

But this knowledge of God, regarded simply as a historical acquaintance with Him, cannot possibly bring salvation. Ver. 3. "*Israel dislikes good; let the enemy pursue it.*" This is the answer that God will give to those who cry to Him. טוב denotes neither "Jehovah as the highest good" (Jerome) or as "the good One" (Sims.), nor "the good law of God" (Schmieder), but the good or salvation which Jehovah has guaranteed to the nation through His covenant of grace, and which He bestowed upon those who kept His covenant. Because *Israel* has despised this good, let the enemy pursue it.

The proof of *Israel's* renunciation of its God is to be found in the facts mentioned in ver. 4. "*They have set up kings, but not from me, have set up princes, and I know it not: their silver and their gold they have made into idols, that it may be cut off.*" The setting up of kings and princes, not from Jehovah, and without His knowledge, *i.e.* without His having been asked, refers chiefly to the founding of the kingdom by Jeroboam I. It is not to be restricted to this, however, but includes at the same time the obstinate persistence of *Israel* in this ungodly attitude on all future occasions, when there was either a change or usurpation of the government. And the fact that not only did the prophet Ahijah foretell to Jeroboam I. that he would rule over the ten tribes (1 Kings xi. 30 sqq.), but Jehu was anointed king over *Israel* by Elisha's command (2 Kings ix.), and therefore both of them received the kingdom by the express will of Jehovah, is not at variance with this, so as to require the solution, that we have a different view here from that which prevails in the books of Kings,—namely, one which sprang out of the repeated changes of government and anarchies in this kingdom (Simson). For neither the divine promise of

the throne, nor the anointing performed by the command of God, warranted their forcibly seizing upon the government,—a crime of which both Jeroboam and Jehu rendered themselves guilty. The way in which both of them paved the way to the throne was not in accordance with the will of God, but was most ungodly (see at 1 Kings xi. 40). Jeroboam was already planning a revolt against Solomon (1 Kings xi. 27), and led the gathering of the ten tribes when they fell away from the house of David (1 Kings xii. 2 sqq.). Of Jehu, again, it is expressly stated in 2 Kings ix. 14, that he conspired against Joram. And the other usurpers, just like the two already named, opened the way to the throne by means of conspiracies, whilst the people not only rebelled against the rightful heir to the throne at Solomon's death, from pure dislike to the royal house of David, which had been appointed by God, and made Jeroboam king, but expressed their approval of all subsequent conspiracies as soon as they had been successful. This did not come from Jehovah, but was a rebellion against Him—a transgression of His covenant. To this must be added the further sin, viz. the setting up of the idolatrous calf-worship on the part of Jeroboam, to which all the kings of Israel adhered. It was in connection with this, that the application of the silver and gold to idols, by which Israel completely renounced the law of Jehovah, had taken place. It is true that silver was not used in the construction of the golden calves; but it was employed in the maintenance of their worship. לִמְעַן יִכָּרֶת: that it (the gold and silver) may be destroyed, as more fully stated in ver. 6. לִמְעַן describes the consequence of this conduct, which, though not designed, was nevertheless inevitable, as if it had been distinctly intended.

Ver. 5. "*Thy calf disgusts, O Samaria; my wrath is kindled against them: how long are they incapable of purity?*" Ver. 6. *For this also is from Israel: a workman made it, and it is not God; but the calf of Samaria will become splinters.*" Zānach (disgusts) points back to ver. 3. As Israel felt disgust at what was good, so did Jehovah at the golden calf of Samaria. It is true that zānach is used here intransitively in the sense of smelling badly, or being loathsome; but this does not alter the meaning, which is obvious enough from the context, namely, that it is Jehovah whom the calf disgusts. The calf of Samaria



is not a golden calf set up in the city of Samaria; as there is no allusion in history to any such calf as this. Samaria is simply mentioned in the place of the kingdom, and the calf is the one that was set up at Bethel, the most celebrated place of worship in the kingdom, which is also the only one mentioned in ch. x. 5, 15. On account of this calf the wrath of Jehovah is kindled against the Israelites, who worship this calf, and cannot desist. This is the thought of the question expressing disgust at these abominations. How long are they incapable of *יָצַד*, i.e. purity of walk before the Lord, instead of the abominations of idolatry (cf. Jer. xix. 4); not "freedom from punishment," as Hitzig supposes. To *לֹא יִצְלָהוּ*, "they are unable," we may easily supply "to bear," as in Isa. i. 14 and Ps. ci. 5. "For" (*כִּי*, ver. 6) follows as an explanation of the main clause in ver. 5, "Thy calf disgusts." The calf of Samaria is an abomination to the Lord, for it is also out of Israel (Israel's God out of Israel itself!); a workman made it,—what folly! *וְהוּא* is a predicate, brought out with greater emphasis by *ו*, *et quidem*, in the sense of *iste*. Therefore will it be destroyed like the golden calf at Sinai, which was burnt and ground to powder (Ex. xxxii. 20; Deut. ix. 21). The *ἀπ. λεγ.* *שִׁבְרֵיהֶם*, from *שָׁבַר*, to cut, signifies ruins or splinters.

This will Israel reap from its ungodly conduct. Ver. 7. "For they sow wind, and reap tempest: it has no stalks; shoot brings no fruit; and even if it brought it, foreigners would devour it." With this figure, which is so frequently and so variously used (cf. ch. x. 13, xii. 2; Job iv. 8; Prov. xxii. 8), the threat is accounted for by a general thought taken from life. The harvest answers to the sowing (cf. Gal. vi. 7, 8). Out of the wind comes tempest. *Wind* is a figurative representation of human exertions; the *tempest*, of destruction. Instead of *rûäch* we have *עֲלָה, עָמַל, אֵפֶר* (nothingness, weariness, wickedness) in ch. x. 13, Job iv. 8, and Prov. xxii. 8. In the second hemistich the figure is carried out still further. *קֶסֶה*, "seed standing upon the stalk," is not to *it* (viz. that which has been sowed). *Tsemach* brings no *gemach*,—a play upon the words, answering to our shoot and fruit. *Gemach*: generally meal, here probably the grain-bearing ear, from which the meal is obtained. But even if the shoot, when grown, should yield

some meal, strangers, *i.e.* foreigners, would consume it. In these words not only are the people threatened with failure of the crop; but the failure and worthlessness of all that they do are here predicted. Not only the corn of Israel, but Israel itself, will be swallowed up.

With this thought the still further threatening of judgment in the next strophe is introduced. Ver. 8. "*Israel is swallowed up; now are they among the nations like a vessel, with which there is no satisfaction.*" The advance in the threat of punishment lies less in the extension of the thought, that not only the fruit of the field, but the whole nation, will be swallowed up by foes, than in the perfect נִלְאָה, which indicates that the time of the ripening of the evil seeds has already begun (Jerome, Simson). עַתָּה הֵי, now already have they become among the nations like a despised vessel, which men cast away as useless (cf. Jer. xxii. 28, xlviii. 38). This lot have they prepared for themselves.

Ver. 9. "*For they went up to Asshur; wild ass goes alone by itself; Ephraim sued for loves.*" Ver. 10. "*Yea, though they sue among the nations, now will I gather them, and they will begin to diminish on account of the burden of the king of the princes.*" Going to Assyria is defined still further in the third clause as suing for loves, *i.e.* for the favour and help of the Assyrians. The folly of this suing is shown in the clause, "wild ass goes by itself alone," the meaning and object of which have been quite mistaken by those who supply a ? *simil.* For neither by connecting it with the preceding words thus, "Israel went to Asshur, like a stubborn ass going by itself" (Ewald), nor by attaching it to those which follow, "like a wild ass going alone, Ephraim sued for loves," do we get any suitable point of comparison. The thought is rather this: whilst even a wild ass, that stupid animal, keeps by itself to maintain its independence, Ephraim tries to form unnatural alliances with the nations of the world, that is to say, alliances that are quite incompatible with its vocation. *Hithnâh*, from *tânâh*, probably a denom. of *'ethnâh* (see at ch. ii. 14), to give the reward of prostitution, here in the sense of bargaining for amours, or endeavouring to secure them by presents. The *kal yithnâ* has the same meaning in ver. 10. The word יִתְּנָה, to which different renderings have been given, can only have a

threatening or punitive sense here; and the suffix cannot refer to **בְּנֵי־יִזְחָל**, but only to the subject contained in *yithnu*, viz. the Ephraimites. The Lord will bring them together, *sc.* among the nations, *i.e.* bring them all thither. **קִבֵּץ** is used in a similar sense in ch. ix. 6. The more precise definition is added in the next clause, in the difficult expression **וַיִּחְלֵי מֵעַתָּה**, in which **וַיִּחְלֵי** may be taken most safely in the sense of "beginning," as in Judg. xx. 31, 2 Chron. xxix. 17, and Ezek. ix. 6, in all of which this form occurs, and **מֵעַתָּה** as an *adject. verb.*, connected with **הָיָה** like the adjective **בְּהוֹת** in 1 Sam. iii. 2: "They begin to be, or become, less (*i.e.* fewer), on account of the burden of the king of princes," *i.e.* under the oppression which they will suffer from the king of Assyria, not by war taxes or deportation, but when carried away into exile. **מֶלֶךְ מְלָכִים** = **מֶלֶךְ שָׂרִים** is a term applied to the great Assyrian king, who boasted, according to Isa. x. 8, that his princes were all kings.

This threat is accounted for in vers. 11 sqq., by an allusion to the sins of Israel. Ver. 11. "*For Ephraim has multiplied altars for sinning, the altars have become to him for sinning.*" Ver. 12. "*I wrote to him the fulnesses of my law; they were counted as a strange thing.*" Israel was to have only one altar, and that in the place where the Lord would reveal His name (Deut. xii. 5 sqq.). But instead of that, Ephraim had built a number of altars in different places, to multiply the sin of idolatry, and thereby heap more and more guilt upon itself. **לַחֲטֹאת** is used, in the first clause, for the act of sin; and in the second, for the consequences of that act. And this was not done from ignorance of the divine will, but from neglect of the divine commandments. **אֶת־כְּתוּב** is a historical present, indicating that what had occurred was continuing still. These words refer unquestionably to the great number of the laws written in the Mosaic *thorah*. **רַבּוֹ**, according to the *chethib* **רַבּוֹ**, with **ח** dropped, equivalent to **רַבְבָּה**, as in 1 Chron. xxix. 7, ten thousand, myriads. The Masoretes, who supposed the number to be used in an arithmetical sense, altered it, as conjecturally unsuitable, into **רַבִּי**, multitudes, although **רַב** does not occur anywhere else in the plural. The expression "the myriads of my law" is hyperbolic, to indicate the almost innumerable multitude of the different commandments contained in the law. It was also in a misapprehension of the nature of the hyperbole that the

supposition originated, that אֶכְתּוֹב was a hypothetical future (Jerome). בָּמוֹ יָר, like something foreign, which does not concern them at all.

Ver. 13. *"Slain-offerings for gifts they sacrifice; flesh, and eat: Jehovah has no pleasure in them: now will He remember their transgression, and visit their sins: they will return to Egypt."*

Ver. 14. *"And Israel forgot its Creator, and built palaces: and Judah multiplied fortified cities: and I shall send fire into its cities, and it will devour its castles."* With the multiplication

of the altars they increased the number of the sacrifices. הֶכְהָבִי is a noun in the plural with the suffix, and is formed from יָרָב by reduplication. The slain-offerings of my sacrificial gifts, equivalent to the gifts of slain-offerings presented to me continually, they sacrifice as flesh, and eat it; that is to say, they are nothing more than flesh, which they slay and eat, and not sacrifices in which Jehovah takes delight, or which could expiate their sins. Therefore the Lord will punish their sins; they will return to Egypt, *i.e.* be driven away into the land of bondage, out of which God once redeemed His people. These words are simply a special application of the threat, held out by Moses in Deut. xxviii. 68, to the degenerate ten tribes. Egypt is merely a type of the land of bondage, as in ch. ix. 3, 6. In ver. 14 the sin of Israel is traced back to its root. This is forgetfulness of God, and deification of their own power, and manifests itself in the erection of הִיכָלוֹת, palaces, not idolatrous temples. Judah also makes itself partaker of this sin, by multiplying the fortified cities, and placing its confidence in fortifications. These castles of false security the Lord will destroy. The 'armānōth answer to the hēkhāloth. The suffixes attached to בָּעָרָיו and אֶרְמְנוֹתֶיהָ refer to both kingdoms: the masculine suffix to Israel and Judah, as a people; the feminine to the two as a land, as in Lam. ii. 5.

Ch. ix. 1-9. Warning against false security. The earthly prosperity of the people and kingdom was no security against destruction. Because Israel had fallen away from its God, it should not enjoy the blessing of its field-produce, but should be carried away to Assyria, where it would be unable to keep any joyful feasts at all. Ver. 1. *"Rejoice not, O Israel, to exult like the nations: for thou hast committed whoredom against thy God: hast loved the wages of whoredom upon all corn-floors."*

Ver. 2. *The threshing-floor and press will not feed them, and the new wine will deceive it.*" The rejoicing to which Israel was not to give itself up was, according to ver. 2, rejoicing at a plentiful harvest. All nations rejoiced, and still rejoice, at this (cf. Isa. ix. 2), because they regard the blessing of harvest as a sign and pledge of the favour and grace of God, which summon them to gratitude towards the giver. Now, when the heathen nations ascribed their gifts to their gods, and in their way thanked them for them, they did this in the ignorance of their heart, without being specially guilty on that account, since they lived in the world without the light of divine revelation. But when Israel rejoiced in a heathenish way at the blessing of its harvest, and attributed this blessing to the Baals (see ch. ii. 7), the Lord could not leave this denial of His gracious benefits unpunished. *אֶל־גִּיל* belongs to *תַּשְׁמִיחַ*, heightening the idea of joy, as in Job iii. 22. *בִּי וְזִיתָ* does not give the object of the joy ("that thou hast committed whoredom:" Ewald and others), but the reason why Israel was not to rejoice over its harvests, namely, because it had become unfaithful to its God, and had fallen into idolatry. *וְזִנָּה מֵעַל*, to commit whoredom out beyond God (by going away from Him). The words, "thou lovest the wages of whoredom upon all corn-floors," are to be understood, according to ch. ii. 7, 14, as signifying that Israel would not regard the harvest-blessing upon its corn-floors as gifts of the goodness of its God, but as presents from the Baals, for which it had to serve them with still greater zeal. There is no ground for thinking of any peculiar form of idolatry connected with the corn-floors. Because of this the Lord would take away from them the produce of the floor and press, namely, according to ver. 3, by banishing the people out of the land. Floor and press will not feed them, *i.e.* will not nourish or satisfy them. The floor and press are mentioned in the place of their contents, or what they yield, *viz.* for corn and oil, as in 2 Kings vi. 27. By the press we must understand the oil-presses (cf. Joel ii. 24), because the new wine is afterwards specially mentioned, and corn, new wine, and oil are connected together in ch. ii. 10, 24. The suffix *הֶם* refers to the people regarded as a community.

Ver. 3. *"They will not remain in the land of Jehovah: Ephraim returns to Egypt, and they will eat unclean things in*

the land of Asshur. Ver. 4. *They will not pour out wine to Jehovah, and their slain-offerings will not please Him: like bread of mourning are they to Him; all who eat it become unclean: for their bread is for themselves, it does not come into the house of Jehovah.*" Because they have fallen away from Jehovah, He will drive them out of His land. The driving away is described as a return to Egypt, as in ch. viii. 13; but Asshur is mentioned immediately afterwards as the actual land of banishment. That this threat is not to be understood as implying that they will be carried away to Egypt as well as to Assyria, but that Egypt is referred to here and in ver. 6, just as in ch. viii. 13, simply as a type of the land of captivity, so that Assyria is represented as a new Egypt, may be clearly seen from the words themselves, in which eating unclean bread in Assyria is mentioned as the direct consequence of their return to Egypt; whereas neither here nor in ver. 6 is their being carried away to Assyria mentioned at all; but, on the contrary, in ver. 6, *Egypt* only is introduced as the place where they are to find their grave. This is still more evident from the fact that Hosea throughout speaks of Asshur alone, as the rod of the wrath of God for His rebellious people. The king of Asshur is king *Jareb* (striver), to whom Ephraim goes for help, and by whom it will be put to shame (ch. v. 13, x. 6); and it is from the Assyrian king *Salman* that devastation and destruction proceed (ch. x. 14). And, lastly, it is expressly stated in ch. xi. 5, that Israel will not return to Egypt, but to Asshur, who will be its king. By the allusion to Egypt, therefore, the carrying away to Assyria is simply represented as a state of bondage and oppression, resembling the sojourn of Israel in Egypt in the olden time, or else the threat contained in Deut. xxviii. 68 is simply transferred to Ephraim. They will eat unclean things in Assyria, not only inasmuch as when, under the oppression of their heathen rulers, they will not be able to observe the laws of food laid down in the law, or will be obliged to eat unclean things from simple want and misery; but also inasmuch as all food, which was not sanctified to the Lord by the presentation of the first-fruits, was unclean food to Israel (Hengstenberg). In Assyria these offerings would cease with the whole of the sacrificial ritual; and the food which was clean in itself would thereby become unclean outside

the land of Jehovah (cf. Ezek. iv. 13). This explanation of מִנְחָה is required by ver. 4, in which a further reason is assigned for the threat. For what we have there is not a description of the present attitude of Israel towards Jehovah, but a picture of the miserable condition of the people in exile. The verbs are pure futures. In Assyria they will neither be able to offer wine to the Lord as a drink-offering, nor such slain-offerings as are well-pleasing to Him. For Israel could only offer sacrifices to its God at the place where He made known His name by revelation, and therefore not in exile, where He had withdrawn His gracious presence from it. The drink-offerings are mentioned, as *pars pro toto*, in the place of all the meat-offerings and drink-offerings, i.e. of the bloodless gifts, which were connected with the *z'bhāclīm*, or burnt-offerings and thank-offerings (*sh'lamīm*, Num. xv. 2-15, xxviii., xxix.), and could never be omitted when the first-fruits were offered (Lev. xxiii. 13, 18). "Their sacrifices:" *zibhchēhem* belongs to יַעֲרֹבֵלָיו (shall be pleasing to Him), notwithstanding the previous *segholta*, because otherwise the subject to יַעֲרֹבֵלָיו would be wanting, and there is evidently quite as little ground for supplying נִסְכֵיהֶם from the preceding clause, as Hitzig proposes, as for assuming that עָרַב here means to mix. Again, we must not infer from the words, "their slain-offerings will not please Him," that the Israelites offered sacrifices when in exile. The meaning is simply that the sacrifices, which they might wish to offer to Jehovah there, would not be well-pleasing to Him. We must not repeat זִבְחֵיהֶם as the subject to the next clause לָהֶם . . . כָּלֵהֶם, in the sense of "their sacrifices will be to them like mourners' bread," which would give no suitable meaning; for though the sacrifices are called bread of God, they are never called the bread of men. The subject may be supplied very readily from *k'lechem* (like bread) thus: their bread, or food, would be to them like mourners' bread; and the correctness of this is proved by the explanatory clause, "for their bread," etc. *Lechem 'onim*, bread of affliction, i.e. of those who mourn for the dead (cf. Deut. xxvi. 14), in other words, the bread eaten at funeral meals. This was regarded as unclean, because the corpse defiled the house, and all who came in contact with it, for seven days (Num. xix. 14). Their bread would resemble bread of this kind, because it had not been sanctified by the offering of

the first-fruits. "For their bread will not come into the house of Jehovah," viz. to be sanctified, "for their souls," i.e. to serve for the preservation of their life.

Their misery will be felt still more keenly on the feast-days. Ver. 5. "*What will ye do on the day of the festival, and on the day of the feast of Jehovah?*" Ver. 6. "*For behold they have gone away because of the desolation: Egypt will gather them together, Memphis bury them: their valuables in silver, thistles will receive them; thorns in their tents.*" As the temple and ritual will both be wanting in their exile, they will be unable to observe any of the feasts of the Lord. No such difference can be shown to exist between *yōm mō'ēd* and *yōm chag Y'hōvāh*, as would permit of our referring *mō'ēd* to feasts of a different kind from *chag*. In Lev. xxiii., all the feasts recurring at a fixed period, on which holy meetings were held, including the Sabbath, are called מועדי יהוה; and even though the three feasts at which Israel was to appear before the Lord, viz. the passover, pentecost, and the feast of tabernacles, are described as *chaggim* in Ex. xxxiv. 18 sqq., every other joyous festival is also called a *chag* (Ex. xxxii. 5; Judg. xxi. 19). It is therefore just as arbitrary on the part of Grotius and Rosenmüller to understand by *mō'ēd* the three yearly pilgrim-festivals, and by *chag Y'hōvāh* all the rest of the feasts, including the new moon, as it is on the part of Simson to restrict the last expression to the great harvest-feast, i.e. the feast of tabernacles (Lev. xxiii. 39, 41). The two words are synonymous, but they are so arranged that by *chag* the idea of joy is brought into greater prominence, and the feast-day is thereby designated as a day of holy joy before Jehovah; whereas *mō'ēd* simply expresses the idea of a feast established by the Lord, and sanctified to Him (see at Lev. xxiii. 2). By the addition of the *chag Y'hōvāh*, therefore, greater emphasis is given to the thought, viz. that along with the feasts themselves all festal joy will also vanish. The perfect הָלַכְנִי (ver. 6) may be explained from the fact, that the prophet saw in spirit the people already banished from the land of the Lord. הָלַכְנִי, to go away out of the land. Egypt is mentioned as the place of banishment, in the same sense as in ver. 3. There will they all find their graves. קָבֵר in combination with קָבֵר is the gathering together of the dead for a common burial, like אָסַף in Ezek. xxix. 5, Jer. viii. 2, xxv. 33. בָּרָא, or בָּרָא, as in



Isa. xix. 13, Jer. ii. 16, xlv. 1, Ezek. xxx. 13, 16, probably contracted from מִנְיָ, answers rather to the Coptic *Membe*, *Memphe*, than to the old Egyptian *Men-nefr*, i.e. *mansio bona*, the profane name of the city of *Memphis*, the ancient capital of Lower Egypt, the ruins of which are to be seen on the western bank of the Nile, to the south of Old Cairo. The sacred name of this city was *Ha-ka-ptah*, i.e. house of the worship of Pthah (see Brugsch, *Geogr. Inschriften*, i. pp. 234-5). In their own land thorns and thistles would take the place of silver valuables. The suffix attached to מִנְיָ refers, *ad sensum*, to the collective מִנְיָ לְכֶסֶם, the valuables in silver. These are not "silver idols," as Hitzig imagines, but houses ornamented and filled with the precious metal, as בְּתֵּי אֲהִלִּיָּהוּ in the parallel clause clearly shows. The growth of thorns and thistles presupposes the utter desolation of the abodes of men (Isa. xxxiv. 13).

Ver. 7. "The days of visitation are come, the days of retribution are come; Israel will learn: a fool the prophet, a madman the man of spirit, for the greatness of thy guilt, and the great enmity. Ver. 8. A spy is Ephraim with my God: the prophet a snare of the bird-catcher in all his ways, enmity in the house of his God. Ver. 9. They have acted most corruptly, as in the days of Gibeah: He remembers their iniquity, visits their sins." The perfects in ver. 7 are prophetic. The time of visitation and retribution is approaching. Then will Israel learn that its prophets, who only predicted prosperity and good (Ezek. xiii. 10), were infatuated fools. וְנִיִּי introduces, without *ki*, what Israel will experience, as in ch. vii. 2, Amos v. 12. It does not follow, from the use of the expression 'ish rūāch, that the reference is to true prophets. 'Ish rūāch (a man of spirit) is synonymous with the 'ish hōlēkh rūāch (a man walking in the spirit) mentioned in Mic. ii. 11 as prophesying lies, and may be explained from the fact, that even the false prophets stood under the influence of a superior demoniacal power, and were inspired by a rūāch sheqer ("a lying spirit," 1 Kings xxii. 22). The words which follow, viz. "a fool is the prophet," etc., which cannot possibly mean, that men have treated, despised, and persecuted the prophets as fools and madmen, are a decisive proof that the expression does not refer to true prophets. עַל רֵב עֲוֹנָךְ is attached to the principal clauses, בָּאוּ . . . הַשִּׁלֵּם. The punishment and retribution occur because of the greatness of the guilt

of Israel. In **וְכִי** the preposition **עַל** continues in force, but as a conjunction: "and because the enmity is great" (cf. Ewald, § 351, a). *Mastēmāh*, enmity, not merely against their fellow-men generally, but principally against God and His servants the true prophets. This is sustained by facts in ver. 8. The first clause, which is a difficult one and has been interpreted in very different ways, "spying is Ephraim **עַם אֱלֹהֵי**" (with or by my God), cannot contain the thought that Ephraim, the tribe, is, according to its true vocation, a watchman for the rest of the people, whose duty it is to stand with the Lord upon the watch-tower and warn Israel when the Lord threatens punishment and judgment (Jerome, Schmidt); for the idea of a prophet standing with Jehovah upon a watch-tower is not only quite foreign to the Old Testament, but irreconcilable with the relation in which the prophets stood to Jehovah. The Lord did indeed appoint prophets as watchmen to His people (Ezek. iii. 17); but He does take His own stand upon the watch-tower with them. *Tsāphāh* in this connection, where prophets are spoken of both before and after, can only denote the eager watching on the part of the prophets for divine revelations, as in Hab. ii. 1, and not their looking out for help; and **עַם אֱלֹהֵי** cannot express their fellowship or agreement with God, if only on account of the suffix "*my God*," in which Hosea contrasts the true God as His own, with the God of the people. The thought indicated would require **אֱלֹהֵי**, a reading which is indeed met with in some codices, but is only a worthless conjecture. **עִם** denotes outward fellowship here: "with" = by the side of. Israel looks out for prophecies or divine revelations with the God of the prophet, *i.e.* at the side of Jehovah; in other words, it does not follow or trust its own prophets, who are not inspired by Jehovah. These are like snares of a bird-catcher in its road, *i.e.* they cast the people headlong into destruction. **וְכִי** stands at the head, both collectively and absolutely. In all its ways there is the trap of the bird-catcher: *i.e.* all its projects and all that it does will only tend to ensnare the people. Hostility to Jehovah and His servants the true prophets, is in the house of the God of the Israelites, *i.e.* in the temple erected for the calf-worship; a fact of which Amos (vii. 10-17) furnishes a practical example. Israel has thereby fallen as deeply into abomination and sins as in the days of Gibeah, *i.e.* as at

the time when the abominable conduct of the men of Gibeah in connection with the concubine of a Levite took place, as related in Judg. xix. sqq., in consequence of which the tribe of Benjamin was almost exterminated. The same depravity on the part of Israel will be equally punished by the Lord now (cf. ch. viii. 13).

*The Degeneracy of Israel, and Ruin of its Kingdom.—*

Chap. ix. 10–xi. 11.

In this section the arrangement of the contents in strophes becomes very apparent. Three times (viz. ch. ix. 10, x. 1, and xi. 1) does the prophet revert to the early days of Israel, and show how Israel has been unfaithful to its divine calling, and from time immemorial has responded to all the manifestations of the love and grace of God by apostasy and idolatry, so that the Lord is obliged to punish the degenerate and obstinate nation with banishment into exile and the destruction of the kingdom. Nevertheless, as the Holy One, and for the sake of His own unchangeable covenant faithfulness, He will not utterly eradicate it.

Chap. ix. 10–17. Ver. 10. *“I found Israel like grapes in the desert, I saw your fathers like early fruit on the fig-tree in the first shooting; but they came to Baal-Peor, and consecrated themselves to shame, and became abominations like their lover.”* Grapes in the desert and early figs are pleasant choice fruits to whoever finds them. This figure therefore indicates the peculiar pleasure which Jehovah found in the people of Israel when He led them out of Egypt, or the great worth which they had in His eyes when He chose them for the people of His possession, and concluded a covenant with them at Sinai (Theod., Cyr.). *Bammidbâr* (in the desert) belongs, so far as its position is concerned, to *‘ânâbhîm*: grapes in the dry, barren desert, where you do not expect to find such refreshing fruit; but, so far as the fact is concerned, it also refers to the place in which Israel was thus found by God, since you can only find fruit in the desert when you are there yourself. The words, moreover, evidently refer to Deut. xxxii. 10 (“I found him (Israel) in the wilderness,” etc.), and point *implicite* to the helpless condition in which Israel was when God first adopted it. The suffix

to *b'rē'shithāh* (at *her* beginning) refers to תְּאֵנָה, the first-fruit, which the fig-tree bears in its first time, at the first shooting. But Israel no longer answered to the good pleasure of God. They came to Baal-Peor. בַּעַל-פְּעוֹר without the preposition אֶל is not the idol of that name, but the place where it was worshipped, which was properly called *Beth-Peor* or *Peor* (see at Num. xxiii. 28 and xxv. 3). יְנוּרִי is chosen instead of יְצִמִּיר (Num. xxiii. 3, 5), to show that Israel ought to have consecrated itself to Jehovah, to have been the *nazir* of Jehovah. *Bōsheth* (shame) is the name given to the idol of Baal-Peor (cf. Jer. iii. 24), the worship of which was a shame to Israel. 'Ohabh, the paramour, is also Baal-Peor. Of all the different rebellions on the part of Israel against Jehovah, the prophet singles out only the idolatry with Baal-Peor, because the principal sin of the ten tribes was Baal-worship in its coarser or more refined forms.

It is very evident that this is what he has in his mind, and that he regards the apostasy of the ten tribes as merely a continuation of that particular idolatry, from the punishment which is announced in vers. 11, 12, as about to fall upon Ephraim in consequence. Ver. 11. "*Ephraim, its glory will fly away like a bird; no birth, and no pregnancy, and no conception.*" Ver. 12. "*Yea, though they bring up their sons, I make them bereft, without a man; for woe to them when I depart from them!*" The glory which God gave to His people through great multiplication, shall vanish away. The licentious worship of luxury will be punished by the diminution of the numbers of the people, by childlessness, and the destruction of the youth that may have grown up. כִּלְיָה, so that there shall be no bearing. בֶּטֶן, the womb, for pregnancy or the fruit of the womb. Even (*kī* emphatic) if the sons (the children) grow up, God will make them bereft, מֵאָדָם, so that there shall be no men there. The grown-up sons shall be swept away by death, by the sword (cf. Deut. xxxii. 25). The last clause gives the reason for the punishment threatened. וְנִם adds force; it usually stands at the head of the sentence, and here belongs to לָהֶם: Yea, woe to them, if I depart from them, or withdraw my favour from them! שׁוּר stands for סוּר, according to the interchangeableness of שׁ and ס (Aquila and Vulg.). This view has more to support it than the supposition that שׁוּר is an error of

the pen for שׁוּר (Ewald, Hitzig, etc.), since שׁוּר, to look, construed with נָ, in the sense of to look away from a person, is never met with, although the meaning is just the same.

The vanishing of the glory of Ephraim is carried out still further in what follows. Ver. 13. "*Ephraim as I selected it for a Tyre planted in the valley; so shall Ephraim lead out its sons to the murderer.*" Ver. 14. *Give them, O Jehovah: what shalt Thou give him? Give them a childless womb and dry breasts.*" In ver. 13 *Ephraim* is the object to רָאִיתִי (I have seen), but on account of the emphasis it is placed first, as in ver. 11; and רָאִיתִי with an accusative and לִ signifies to select anything for a purpose, as in Gen. xxii. 8. The Lord had selected Ephraim for Himself to be a Tyre planted in the meadow, i.e. in a soil adapted for growth and prosperity, had intended for it the bloom and glory of the rich and powerful Tyre; but now, for its apostasy, He would give it up to desolation, and dedicate its sons, i.e. its people, to death by the sword. The commentators, for the most part, like the LXX., have overlooked this meaning of רָאִיתִי, and therefore have not only been unable to explain לְטֹסֹר (for a Tyre), but have been driven either to resort to alterations of the text, like לְטֹסֹרָה, "after the form" (Ewald), or to arbitrary assumptions, e.g. that טֹסֹר signifies "palm" after the Arabic (Arnold, Hitzig), or that לְטֹסֹר means "as far as Tyre" (ל = עַר), in order to bring a more or less forced interpretation into the sentence. The *Vav* before *Ephraim* introduces the apodosis to כִּי־אֶשְׁרֶךְ: "as I have selected Ephraim, so shall Ephraim lead out," etc. On the construction לְהוֹצִיָא, see Ewald, § 237, c. In ver. 14 the threat rises into an appeal to God to execute the threatened punishment. The excited style of the language is indicated in the interpolated *mah-tittēn* (what wilt Thou give?). The words do not contain an intercessory prayer on the part of the prophet, that God will not punish the people too severely but condemn them to barrenness rather than to the loss of the young men (Ewald), but are expressive of holy indignation at the deep corruption of the people.

The Lord thereupon replies in ver. 15: "*All their wickedness is at Gilgal; for there I took them into hatred: for the evil of their doings will I drive them out of my house, and not love them any more; all their princes are rebellious.*" How far all the

wickedness of Ephraim was concentrated at Gilgal it is impossible to determine more precisely, since we have no historical accounts of the idolatrous worship practised there (see at ch. iv. 15). That Gilgal was the scene of horrible human sacrifices, as Hitzig observes at ch. xii. 12, cannot be proved from ch. xiii. 2. **אִשָּׁה** is used here in an inchoative sense, viz. to conceive hatred. On account of their wickedness they should be expelled from the house, i.e. the congregation of Jehovah (see at ch. viii. 1). The expression "I will drive them out of my house" (*mibbēthi 'āgarāshēm*) may be explained from Gen. xxi. 10, where Sarah requests Abraham to drive (*gārash*) Hagar her maid out of the house along with her son, that the son of the maid may not inherit with Isaac, and where God commands the patriarch to carry out Sarah's will. The expulsion of Israel from the house of the Lord is separation from the fellowship of the covenant nation and its blessings, and is really equivalent to loving it no longer. There is a play upon words in the last clause **אֲשֶׁרֵיהֶם סוֹרְרִים**.

Ver. 16. "*Ephraim is smitten: their root is dried up; they will bear no fruit: even if they beget, I slay the treasures of their womb.*" Ver. 17. "*My God rejects them: for they have not hearkened to Him, and they shall be fugitives among the nations.*" In ver. 16a Israel is compared to a plant, that is so injured by the heat of the sun (Ps. cxxi. 6, cii. 5), or by a worm (Jonah iv. 7), that it dries up and bears no more fruit. The perfects are a prophetic expression, indicating the certain execution of the threat. This is repeated in ver. 16b in figurative language; and the threatening in vers. 11, 12, is thereby strengthened. Lastly, in ver. 17 the words of threatening are rounded off by a statement of the reason for the rejection of Israel; and this rejection is described as banishment among the nations, according to Deut. xxviii. 65.

Ch. x. In a fresh turn the concluding thought of the last strophe (ch. ix. 10) is resumed, and the guilt and punishment of Israel still more fully described in two sections, vers. 1-8 and 9-15. Ver. 1. "*Israel is a running vine; it set fruit for itself: the more of its fruit, the more altars did it prepare; the better its land, the better pillars did they make.*" Ver. 2. "*Smooth was their heart, now will they atone. He will break in pieces their altars, desolate their pillars.*" Ver. 3. "*Yea, now will they say, No king*

to us! for we feared not Jehovah; and the king, what shall he do to us?" Under the figure of a vine running luxuriantly, which did indeed set some good fruit, but bore no sound ripe grapes, the prophet describes Israel as a glorious plantation of God Himself, which did not answer the expectations of its Creator. The figure is simply sketched in a few bold lines. We have an explanatory parallel in Ps. lxxx. 9-12. The participle *bōqēq* does not mean "empty" or "emptying out" here; for this does not suit the next clause, according to which the fruit was set, but from the primary meaning of *bāqāq*, to pour out, pouring itself out, overflowing, *i.e.* running luxuriantly. It has the same meaning, therefore, as *נִרְחַת* in Ezek. xvii. 6, that which extends its branches far and wide, that is to say, grows most vigorously. The next sentence, "it set fruit," still belongs to the figure; but in the third sentence the figure passes over into a literal prophecy. According to the abundance of its fruit, Israel made many altars; and in proportion to the goodness of its land, it made better *מִצְבֹּת*, Baal's pillars (see at 1 Kings xiv. 23); *i.e.* as Israel multiplied, and under the blessing of God attained to prosperity, wealth, and power in the good land (Ex. iii. 8), it forgot its God, and fell more and more into idolatry (cf. ch. ii. 10, viii. 4, 11). The reason of all this was, that their heart was smooth, *i.e.* dissimulating, not sincerely devoted to the Lord, inasmuch as, under the appearance of devotedness to God, they still clung to idols (for the fact, see 2 Kings xvii. 9). The word *chālāq*, to be smooth, was mostly applied by a Hebrew to the tongue, lip, mouth, throat, and speech (Ps. v. 10, xii. 3, lv. 22; Prov. v. 3), and not to the heart. But in Ezek. xii. 24 we read of *smooth*, *i.e.* deceitful prophesying; and there is all the more reason for retaining the meaning "smooth" here, that the rendering "their heart is divided," which is supported by the ancient versions, cannot be grammatically defended. For *chālāq* is not used in *kal* in an intransitive sense; and the active rendering, "He (*i.e.* God) has divided their heart" (Hitzig), gives an unscriptural thought. They will now atone for this, for God will destroy their altars and pillars. *עֲרַף*, "to break the neck of the altars," is a bold expression, applied to the destruction of the altars by breaking off the horns (compare Amos iii. 14). Then will the people see and be compelled to confess that it has no longer a king,

because it has not feared the Lord, since the king who has been set up in opposition to the will of the Lord (ch. viii. 4) cannot bring either help or deliverance (ch. xiii. 10). עֲשֵׂה, to do, i.e. to help or be of use to a person (cf. Eccles. ii. 2).

The thoughts of vers. 2, 3 are carried out still further in vers. 4-7. Ver. 4. *"They have spoken words, sworn falsely, made treaties: thus right springs up like darnel in the furrows of the field."* Ver. 5. *"For the calves of Beth-Aven the inhabitants of Samaria were afraid: yea, its people mourn over it, and its sacred ministers will tremble at it, at its glory, because it has strayed from them."* Ver. 6. *"Men will also carry it to Asshur, as a present for king Jareb: shame will seize upon Ephraim, and Israel will be put to shame for its counsel."* The dissimulation of heart (ver. 3) manifested itself in their speaking words which were nothing but words, i.e. in vain talk (cf. Isa. lviii. 13), in false swearing, and in the making of treaties. אָלוֹת, by virtue of the parallelism, is an infin. abs. for אָלוֹהַ, formed like בָּרַח, analogous to שָׁחַח (Isa. xxii. 13; see Ewald, § 240, b). בָּרַח בָּרִית, in connection with false swearing, must signify the making of a covenant without any truthfulness in it, i.e. the conclusion of treaties with foreign nations—for example, with Assyria—which they were inclined to observe only so long as they could promise themselves advantages from them. In consequence of this, right has become like a bitter plant growing luxuriantly (רָשָׁע = רָשָׁע; see at Deut. xxix. 17). *Mishpāt* does not mean judgment here, or the punitive judgment of God (Chald. and many others), for this could hardly be compared with propriety to weeds running over everything, but *right* in its degeneracy into wrong, or right that men have turned into bitter fruit or poison (Amos vi. 12). This spreads about in the kingdom, as weeds spread luxuriantly in the furrows of the field (שָׁרֵי a poetical form for שָׁרֵה, like Deut. xxxii. 13, Ps. viii. 8). Therefore the judgment cannot be delayed, and is already approaching in so threatening a manner, that the inhabitants of Samaria tremble for the golden calves. The plural *'eglōth* is used with indefinite generality, and gives no warrant, therefore, for the inference that there were several golden calves set up in Bethel. Moreover, this would be at variance with the fact, that in the sentences which follow we find *"the (one) calf"* spoken of. The feminine form *'eglōth*, which only occurs here, is also probably



connected with the abstract use of the plural, inasmuch as the feminine is the proper form for abstracts. *Bēth'-āven* for *Bēth'-ēl*, as in ch. iv. 15. *Shākhēn* is construed with the plural, as an adjective used in a collective sense. כִּי (ver. 5) is emphatic, and the suffixes attached to עַמּוֹ and כְּמָרִי do not refer to Samaria, but to the idol, i.e. the calf, since the prophet distinctly calls Israel, which ought to have been the nation of Jehovah, the nation of its calf-idol, which mourned with its priests (*k'mārim*, the priests appointed in connection with the worship of the calves: see at 2 Kings xxiii. 5) for the carrying away of the calf to Assyria. גִּל does not mean to exult or rejoice here, nor to tremble (applied to the leaping of the heart from fear, as it does from joy), but has the same meaning as חִיל in Ps. xcvi. 9. עָלָיו is still further defined by עַל-כְּבוֹדוֹ, "for its glory," i.e. not for the temple-treasure at Bethel (Hitzig), nor the one glorious image of the calf, as the symbol of the state-god (Ewald, Umbreit), but the calf, to which the people attributed the glory of the true God. The perfect, *gālāh*, is used prophetically of that which was as good as complete and certain (for the *fut exact.*, cf. Ewald, § 343, a). The golden calf, the glory of the nation, will have to wander into exile. This cannot even save itself; it will be taken to Assyria, to king *Jareb* (see at ch. v. 13), as *minchāh*, a present or tribute (see 2 Sam. viii. 2, 6; 1 Kings v. 1). For the construing of the passive with אָחַז, see Ges. § 143, 1, a. Then will Ephraim (= Israel) be seized by reproach and shame. *Boshnāh*, a word only met with here; it is formed from the masculine *bōshen*, which is not used at all (see Ewald, § 163, 164).

With the carrying away of the golden calf the kingdom of Samaria also perishes, and desert plants will grow upon the places of idols. Vers. 7, 8. "Destroyed is Samaria; her king like a splinter on the surface of the water. And destroyed are the high places of Aven, the sin of Israel: thorn and thistle will rise up on their altars; and they will speak to the mountains, Cover us! and to the hills, Fall on us!" שְׁמֶרֶן מְלָכָה is not an asyndeton, "Samaria and its king;" but *Shōm'rōn* is to be taken absolutely, "as for Samaria," although, as a matter of fact, not only Samaria, the capital of the kingdom, but the kingdom itself, was destroyed. For *malkāh* does not refer to any particular king, but is used in a general sense for "the king that

Samaria had," so that the destruction of the monarchy is here predicted (cf. ver. 15). The idea that the words refer to one particular king, is not only at variance with the context, which contains no allusion to any one historical occurrence, but does not suit the simile: like a splinter upon the surface of the water, which is carried away by the current, and vanishes without leaving a trace behind. *Qetseph* is not "foam" (Chald., Symm., Rabb.), but a broken branch, a fagot or a splinter, as *q̄tsâphâh* in Joel i. 7 clearly shows. *Bâmôth 'âven* are the buildings connected with the image-worship at Bethel (*'âven* = *Beth-'el*, ver. 5), the temple erected there (*bêth bâmôth*), together with the altar, possibly also including other illegal places of sacrifice there, which constituted the chief sin of the kingdom of Israel. These were to be so utterly destroyed, that thorns and thistles would grow upon the ruined altars (cf. Gen. iii. 18). "The sign of extreme solitude, that there are not even the walls left, or any traces of the buildings" (Jerome). When the kingdom shall be thus broken up, together with the monarchy and the sacred places, the inhabitants, in their hopeless despair, will long for swift death and destruction. Saying to the mountains, "Cover us," etc., implies much more than hiding themselves in the holes and clefts of the rocks (Isa. ii. 19, 21). It expresses the desire to be buried under the falling mountains and hills, that they may no longer have to bear the pains and terrors of the judgment. In this sense are the words transferred by Christ, in Luke xxiii. 30, to the calamities attending the destruction of Jerusalem, and in Rev. vi. 16 to the terrors of the last judgment.

Vers. 9-15. After the threatening of punishment has thus been extended in ver. 8, even to the utter ruin of the kingdom, the prophet returns in ver. 9 to the earlier times, for the purpose of exhibiting in a new form the deeply rooted sinfulness of the people, and then, under cover of an appeal to them to return to righteousness, depicting still further the time of visitation, and (in vers. 14, 15) predicting with still greater clearness the destruction of the kingdom and the overthrow of the monarchy. Ver. 9. "*Since the days of Gibeah hast thou sinned, O Israel: there have they remained: the war against the sons of wickedness did not overtake them at Gibeah.*" Ver. 10. "*According to my desire shall I chastise them; and nations will be*

gathered together against them, to bind them to their two transgressions." Just as in ch. ix. 9, the days of Gibeah, *i.e.* the days when that ruthless crime was committed at Gibeah upon the concubine of the Levite, are mentioned as a time of deep corruption; so are those days described in the present passage as the commencement of Israel's sin. For it is as obvious that מִיָּמֵי is not to be understood in a comparative sense, as it is that the days of Gibeah are not to be taken as referring to the choice of Saul, who sprang from Gibeah, to be their king (Chald.). The following words, שָׁם עָמְדוּ וְגו', which are very difficult, and have been variously explained, do not describe the conduct of Israel in those days; for, in the first place, the statement that the war did not overtake them is by no means in harmony with this, since the other tribes avenged that crime so severely that the tribe of Benjamin was almost exterminated; and secondly, the suffix attached to תְּשִׁינָם evidently refers to the same persons as that appended to אֶפְרַיִם in ver. 10, *i.e.* to the Israelites of the ten tribes, to which Hosea foretells the coming judgment. These are therefore the subject to עָמְדוּ, and consequently עָמַד signifies to stand, to remain, to persevere (cf. Isa. xlvii. 12, Jer. xxxii. 14). There, in Gibeah, did they remain, that is to say, they persevered in the sin of Gibeah, without the war at Gibeah against the sinners overtaking them (the imperfect, in a subordinate clause, used to describe the necessary consequence; and עָלָה transposed from עֲלָה, like וַעֲלָה in Deut. xxviii. 25 for וַעֲלָה). The meaning is, that since the days of Gibeah the Israelites persist in the same sin as the Gibeahites; but whereas those sinners were punished and destroyed by the war, the ten tribes still live on in the same sin without having been destroyed by any similar war. Jehovah will now chastise them for it. בְּאֶתְרִי, in my desire, equivalent to according to my wish,—an anthropomorphic description of the severity of the chastisement. וְאֶפְרַיִם from יֶסֶר (according to Ewald, § 139, a), with the Vav of the apodosis. The chastisement will consist in the fact, that nations will be gathered together against Israel בְּאֶפְרַיִם, *lit.* at their binding, *i.e.* when I shall bind them. The *chethib* עֵינֵיהֶם cannot well be the plural of עֵינַי, because the plural עֵינֹת is not used for the eyes; and the rendering, "before their two eyes," in the sense of "without their being able to prevent it"

(Ewald), yields the unheard-of conception of binding a person before his own eyes; and, moreover, the use of *שָׁמַי עֵינָיו* instead of the simple dual would still be left unexplained. We must therefore give the preference to the *keri* עֹנֶה, and regard the *chethib* as another form, that may be accounted for from the transition of the verbs עָי into עָו, and עֹנֶה as a contraction of עֹנֶה, since עֹנֶה cannot be shown to have either the meaning of "furrow" (Chald., A. E.), or that of the severe labour of "tributary service." And, moreover, neither of these meanings would give us a suitable thought; whilst the very same objection may be brought against the supposition that the double-ness of the work refers to Ephraim and Judah, which has been brought against the rendering "to bind to his furrows," viz. that it would be *non solum ineptum, sed locutionis monstrum*. לְשָׁמַי עֵינָיו, "to their two transgressions" to bind them: i.e. to place them in connection with the transgressions by the punishment, so that they will be obliged to drag them along like beasts of burden. By the two transgressions we are to understand neither the two golden calves at Bethel and Dan (Hitzig), nor unfaithfulness towards Jehovah and devotedness to idols, after Jer. ii. 13 (Cyr., Theod.); but their apostasy from Jehovah and the royal house of David, in accordance with ch. iii. 5, where it is distinctly stated that the ultimate conversion of the nation will consist in its seeking Jehovah and David their king.

In the next verse the punishment is still further defined, and also extended to Judah. Ver. 11. "*And Ephraim is an instructed cow, which loves to thresh; and I, I have come over the beauty of her neck: I yoke Ephraim; Judah will plough, Jacob harrow itself.*" *M'lummádâh*, instructed, trained to work, received its more precise definition from the words "loving to thresh" (*ôhabhî*, a participle with the connecting *Yod* in the constructive: see Ewald, § 211, *b*), not as being easier work in comparison with the hard task of driving, ploughing, and harrowing, but because in threshing the ox was allowed to eat at pleasure (Deut. xxv. 4), from which Israel became fat and strong (Deut. xxxii. 15). Threshing, therefore, is a figurative representation not of the conquest of other nations (as in Mic. iv. 13, Isa. xli. 15), but of pleasant, productive, profitable labour. Israel had accustomed itself to

this, from the fact that God had bestowed His blessing upon it (ch. xiii. 6). But it would be different now. עָבַרְתִּי עַל, a prophetic perfect: I come over the neck, used in a hostile sense, and answering to our "rushing in upon a person." The actual idea is that of putting a heavy yoke upon the neck, not of putting a rider upon it. אָרָכִיב, not to mount or ride, but to drive, or use for drawing and driving, *i.e.* to harness, and that, as the following clauses show, to the plough and harrow, for the performance of hard field-labour, which figuratively represents subjugation and bondage. Judah is also mentioned here again, as in ch. viii. 14, vi. 11, etc. *Jacob*, in connection with Judah, is not a name for the whole nation (or the twelve tribes), but is synonymous with Ephraim, *i.e.* Israel of the ten tribes. This is required by the correspondence between the last two clauses, which are simply a further development of the expression אָרָכִיב אֶפְרַיִם, with an extension of the punishment threatened against Ephraim to Judah also.

The call to repentance and reformation of life is then appended in vers. 12, 13, clothed in similar figures. Ver. 12. *"Sow to yourselves for righteousness, reap according to love; plough for yourselves virgin soil: for it is time to seek Jehovah, till He come and rain righteousness upon you."* Ver. 13. *"Ye have ploughed wickedness, ye have reaped crime: eaten the fruit of lying: because thou hast trusted in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men."* Sowing and reaping are figures used to denote their spiritual and moral conduct. לְצִדִּיקָה, for righteousness, is parallel to לִפְיִי חֶסֶד; *i.e.* sow that righteousness may be able to spring up like seed, *i.e.* righteousness towards your fellow-men. The fruit of this will be *chesed*, condescending love towards the poor and wretched. *Nir nir*, both here and in Jer. iv. 3 to plough virgin soil, *i.e.* to make land not yet cultivated arable. We have an advance in this figure: they are to give up all their previous course of conduct, and create for themselves a new sphere for their activity, *i.e.* commence a new course of life. וְעַתָּה, and indeed it is time, equivalent to, for it is high time to give up your old sinful ways and seek the Lord, till (עַד) He come, *i.e.* till He turn His grace to you again, and cause it to rain upon you. *Tsedeq*, righteousness, not salvation, a meaning which the word never has, and least

of all here, where *tsedeq* corresponds to the *ts'dāqāh* of the first clause. God causes righteousness to rain, inasmuch as He not only gives strength to secure it, like rain for the growth of the seed (cf. Isa. xlv. 3), but must also generate and create it in man by His Spirit (Ps. li. 12). The reason for this summons is given in ver. 13, in another allusion to the moral conduct of Israel until now. Hitherto they have ploughed as well as reaped unrighteousness and sin, and eaten lies as the fruit thereof,—lies, inasmuch as they did not promote the prosperity of the kingdom as they imagined, but only led to its decay and ruin. For they did not trust in Jehovah the Creator and rock of salvation, but in their way, *i.e.* their deeds and their might, in the strength of their army (Amos vi. 13), the worthlessness of which they will now discover.

Ver. 14. *"A tumult will arise against thy peoples, and all thy fortifications are laid waste, as Shalman laid Beth-Arbeel waste in the day of the war: mother and children are dashed to pieces."*

Ver. 15. *Thus hath Bethel done to you because of the wickedness of your wickedness: in the morning dawn the king of Israel is cut off, cut off."* אָפּ with א as *mater lect.* (Ewald, § 15, e), construed with ב: to rise up against a person, as in Ps. xxvii. 12, Job xvi. 8. מִלְחָמָה, war, tumult, as in Amos ii. 2. מִלְחָמָה: against thy people of war. The expression is chosen with a reference to *rōbh gibbōrīm* (the multitude of mighty men), in which Israel put its trust. The meaning, countrymen, or tribes, is restricted to the older language of the Pentateuch. The singular מִלְחָמָה refers to מִלְחָמָה, as in Isa. lxiv. 10, contrary to the ordinary language (cf. Ewald, § 317, c). Nothing is known concerning the devastation of Beth-Arbeel by Shalman; and hence there has always been great uncertainty as to the meaning of the words. *Shalman* is no doubt a contracted form of *Shalmanezer*, the king of Assyria, who destroyed the kingdom of the ten tribes (2 Kings xvii. 6). *Beth-'arbēl* is hardly Arbela of Assyria, which became celebrated through the victory of Alexander (Strab. xvi. 1, 3), since the Israelites could scarcely have become so well acquainted with such a remote city, as that the prophet could hold up the desolation that befel it as an example to them, but in all probability the *Arbela* in *Galilæa Superior*, which is mentioned in 1 Macc. ix. 2, and very frequently in Josephus, a place in the tribe of Naphtali, between Sephoris

and Tiberias (according to Robinson, *Pal.* iii. pp. 281-2, and *Bibl. Researches*, p. 343: the modern *Irbid*). The objection offered by Hitzig,—viz. that *shōd* is a noun in ch. ix. 6, vii. 13, xii. 2, and that the infinitive construct, with ל prefixed, is written לְשׁוֹד in Jer. xlvii. 4; and lastly, that if *Shalman* were the subject, we should expect the preposition אֶת before בֵּית, —is not conclusive, and the attempt which he makes to explain *Salman-Beth-Arbel* from the Sanscrit is not worth mentioning. The clause “mother and children,” etc., a proverbial expression denoting inhuman cruelty (see at Gen. xxxii. 12), does not merely refer to the conduct of Shalman in connection with Beth-Arbel, possibly in the campaign mentioned in 2 Kings xvii. 3, but is also intended to indicate the fate with which the whole of the kingdom of Israel was threatened. In ver. 16 this threat concludes with an announcement of the overthrow of the monarchy, accompanied by another allusion to the guilt of the people. The subject to עָשָׂה is בֵּתֶּךָ עָשָׂה is *Beth-el* (Chald.), not Shalman or Jehovah. Bethel, the seat of the idolatry, prepares this lot for the people on account of its great wickedness. עָשָׂה is a *perf. proph.*; and רָעַת רָעָהְכֶם, wickedness in its second potency, extreme wickedness (cf. Ewald, § 313, c). *Basshachar*, in the morning-dawn, i.e. at the time when prosperity is once more apparently about to dawn, *tempore pacis alluscente* (Cocc., Hgst.). The gerund נִרְמָה adds to the force; and מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל is not this or the other king, but as in ver. 7, the king generally, i.e. the monarchy of Israel.

Ch. xi. The prophet goes back a third time (cf. ch. x. 1, ix. 10) to the early times of Israel, and shows how the people had repaid the Lord, for all the proofs of His love, with nothing but ingratitude and unfaithfulness; so that it would have merited utter destruction from off the earth, if God should not restrain His wrath for the sake of His unchangeable faithfulness, in order that, after severely chastening, He might gather together once more those that were rescued from among the heathen. Ver. 1. “When Israel was young, then I loved him, and I called my son out of Egypt. Ver. 2. Men called to them; so they went away from their countenance: they offer sacrifice to the Baals, and burn incense to the idols.” Ver. 1 rests upon Ex. iv. 22, 23, where the Lord directs Moses to say to Pharaoh, “Israel is my first-born son; let my son go, that he may serve me.” Israel

was the son of Jehovah, by virtue of its election to be Jehovah's peculiar people (see at Ex. iv. 22). In this election lay the ground for the love which God showed to Israel, by bringing it out of Egypt, to give it the land of Canaan, promised to the fathers for its inheritance. The adoption of Israel as the son of Jehovah, which began with its deliverance out of the bondage of Egypt, and was completed in the conclusion of the covenant at Sinai, forms the first stage in the carrying out of the divine work of salvation, which was completed in the incarnation of the Son of God for the redemption of mankind from death and ruin. The development and guidance of Israel as the people of God all pointed to Christ; not, however, in any such sense as that the nation of Israel was to bring forth the Son of God from within itself, but in this sense, that the relation which the Lord of heaven and earth established and sustained with that nation, was a preparation for the union of God with humanity, and paved the way for the incarnation of His Son, by the fact that Israel was trained to be a vessel of divine grace. All essential factors in the history of Israel point to this as their end, and thereby become types and material prophecies of the life of Him in whom the reconciliation of man to God was to be realized, and the union of God with the human race to be developed into a personal unity. It is in this sense that the second half of our verse is quoted in Matt. ii. 15 as a prophecy of Christ, not because the words of the prophet refer directly and immediately to Christ, but because the sojourn in Egypt, and return out of that land, had the same significance in relation to the development of the life of Jesus Christ, as it had to the nation of Israel. Just as Israel grew into a nation in Egypt, where it was out of the reach of Canaanitish ways, so was the child Jesus hidden in Egypt from the hostility of Herod. But ver. 2 is attached thus as an antithesis: this love of its God was repaid by Israel with base apostasy. וְהָאֱלֹהִים, they, viz. the prophets (cf. ver. 7; 2 Kings xvii. 13; Jer. vii. 25, xxv. 4; Zech. i. 4), called to them, called the Israelites to the Lord and to obedience to Him; but they (the Israelites) went away from their countenance, would not hearken to the prophets, or come to the Lord (Jer. ii. 31). The thought is strengthened by וְהָאֱלֹהִים, with the וְהָאֱלֹהִים of the protasis omitted (Ewald, § 360, α): as the prophets called, so the Israelites drew back from them, and



served idols. מַעֲלִים as in ch. ii. 15, and פִּסְלִים as in 2 Kings xvii. 41 and Deut. vii. 5, 25 (see at Ex. xx. 4).

Nevertheless the Lord continued to show love to them. Vers. 3, 4, "*And I, I have taught Ephraim to walk: He took them in His arms, and they did not know that I healed them. I drew them with bands of a man, with cords of love, and became to them like a lifter up of the yoke upon their jaws, and gently towards him did I give (him) food.*" תַּחֲבִילָתִי, a *hiphil*, formed after the Aramæan fashion (cf. Ges. § 55, 5), by hardening the ה into ח, and construed with ל, as the *hiphil* frequently is (e.g. ch. x. 1; Amos viii. 9), a *denom.* of רָגַל, to teach to walk, to guide in leading-strings, like a child that is being trained to walk. It is a figurative representation of paternal care for a child's prosperity. לִקְחָם, *per aphæresin*, for לִקְחָם, like קָח for לָקַח in Ezek. xvii. 5. The sudden change from the first person to the third seems very strange to our ears; but it is not uncommon in Hebrew, and is to be accounted for here from the fact, that the prophet could very easily pass from speaking in the name of God to speaking of God Himself. קָח cannot be either an infinitive or a participle, on account of the following word וְרִעְוֹתַי, *his arms*. The two clauses refer chiefly to the care and help afforded by the Lord to His people in the Arabian desert; and the prophet had Deut. i. 31 floating before his mind: "in the wilderness the Lord thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son." The last clause also refers to this, רַפְּאוֹתָיו, pointing back to Ex. xv. 26, where the Lord showed Himself as the physician of Israel, by making the bitter water at Marah drinkable, and at the same time as their helper out of every trouble. In ver. 4, again, there is a still further reference to the manifestation of the love of God to Israel on the journey through the wilderness. חֲבִילֵי אָדָם, cords with which men are led, more especially children that are weak upon their feet, in contrast with ropes, with which men control wild, unmanageable beasts (Ps. xxxii. 9), are a figurative representation of the paternal, humane guidance of Israel, as explained in the next figure, "cords of love." This figure leads on to the kindred figure of the yoke laid upon beasts, to harness them for work. As merciful masters lift up the yoke upon the cheeks of their oxen, *i.e.* push it so far back that the animals can eat their food in comfort, so has the Lord made the yoke of the law, which

has been laid upon His people, both soft and light. As **הָרִים עַל עַלְלֵי** does not mean to take the yoke away from (**יָעֵל**) the cheeks, but to lift it above the cheeks, *i.e.* to make it easier, by pushing it back, we cannot refer the words to the liberation of Israel from the bondage of Egypt, but can only think of what the Lord did, to make it easy for the people to observe the commandments imposed upon them, when they were received into His covenant (Ex. xxiv. 3, 7), including not only the many manifestations of mercy which might and ought to have allured them to reciprocate His love, and yield a willing obedience to His commandments, but also the means of grace provided in their worship, partly in the institution of sacrifice, by which a way of approach was opened to divine grace to obtain forgiveness of sin, and partly in the institution of feasts, at which they could rejoice in the gracious gifts of their God. **וַיֵּאָסֶה** is not the first pers. imperf. *hiphil* of **נָסָה** ("I inclined myself to him;" Symm., Syr., and others), in which case we should expect **וַיֵּאָסֶה**, but an adverb, softly, comfortably; and **וַיֵּאָסֶה** belongs to it, after the analogy of 2 Sam. xviii. 5. **וַיֵּאָסֶה** is an anomalous formation for **וַיֵּאָסֶה**, like **וַיֵּאָסֶה** for **וַיֵּאָסֶה** in Jer. xli. 8 (cf. Ewald, § 192, *d*; Ges. § 68, 2, Anm. 1). Jerome has given the meaning quite correctly: "and I gave them manna for food in the desert, which they enjoyed."

By despising this love, Israel brings severe punishment upon itself. Ver. 5. *"It will not return into the land of Egypt; but Asshur, he is its king, because they refused to return."* Ver. 6. *"And the sword will sweep round in its cities, and destroy its bolts, and devour, because of their counsels."* Ver. 7. *"My people is bent upon apostasy from me: and if men call it upwards, it does not raise itself at all."* The apparent contradiction between the words, "It will not return into the land of Egypt," and the threat contained in ch. viii. 13, ix. 3, that Israel should return to Egypt, ought not to lead us to resort to alterations of the text, or to take **לֹא** in the sense of **לֹא**, and connect it with the previous verse, as is done by the LXX., Mang., and others, or to make an arbitrary paraphrase of the words, either by taking **לֹא** in the sense of **לֹא**, and rendering it as a question, "Should it not return?" equivalent to "it will certainly return" (Maurer, Ewald, etc.); or by understanding the return to Egypt as signifying the longing of the people for help from Egypt

(Rosenmüller). The emphatic הוּא of the second clause is at variance with all these explanations, since they not only fail to explain it, but it points unmistakeably to an antithesis: "Israel will not return to Egypt; but Asshur, it shall be its king," *i.e.* it shall come under the dominion of Assyria. The supposed contradiction is removed as soon as we observe that in ch. viii. 13, ix. 3, 6, Egypt is a type of the land of bondage; whereas here the typical interpretation is precluded partly by the contrast to Asshur, and still more by the correspondence in which the words stand to ver. 1b. Into the land from which Jehovah called His people, Israel shall not return, lest it should appear as though the object, for which it had been brought out of Egypt and conducted miraculously through the desert, had been frustrated by the impenitence of the people. But it is to be brought into another bondage. אֲשׁוּר is appended adversatively. Asshur shall rule over it as king, because they refuse to return, *sc.* to Jehovah. The Assyrians will wage war against the land, and conquer it. The sword (used as the principal weapon, to denote the destructive power of war) will circulate in the cities of Israel, make the round of the cities as it were, and destroy its bolts, *i.e.* the bolts of the gates of the fortifications of Ephraim. *Baddim*, poles (Ex. xxv. 13 sqq.), cross-poles or cross-beams, with which the gates were fastened, hence bolts in the literal sense, as in Job xvii. 16, and not tropically for "princes" (Ges.), *electi* (Jer., Chald., etc.). "On account of their counsels:" this is more fully defined in ver. 7. וְעַמִּי, and my people (= *since* my people) are harnessed to apostasy from me (*m'shūbhāthi*, with an objective suffix). תְּלֹאִים, lit. suspended on apostasy, *i.e.* not "swaying about in consequence of apostasy or in constant danger of falling away" (Chald., Syr., Hengst.), since this would express too little in the present context and would not suit the second half of the verse, but impaled or fastened upon apostasy as upon a stake, so that it cannot get loose. Hence the constructing of תְּלֹאִה with ל instead of עַל or ב (2 Sam. xviii. 10), may be accounted for from the use of the verb in a figurative sense. אֶל־עַל, upwards (עַל as in ch. vii. 16), do they (the prophets: see ver. 2) call them; but it does not rise, *sc.* to return to God, or seek help from on high. רֹמֶם *pilel*, with the meaning of the *kal* intensified, to make a rising, *i.e.* to rise up. This explana-

tion appears simpler than supplying an object, say "the soul" (Ps. xxv. 1), or "the eyes" (Ezek. xxxiii. 25).

They deserved to be utterly destroyed for this, and would have been if the compassion of God had not prevented it. With this turn a transition is made in ver. 8 from threatening to promise. Ver. 8. "*How could I give thee up, O Ephraim! surrender thee, O Israel! how could I give thee up like Admah, make thee like Zeboim! My heart has changed within me, my compassion is excited all at once.*" Ver. 9. "*I will not execute the burning heat of my wrath, I will not destroy Ephraim again: for I am God, and not man, the Holy One in the midst of thee: and come not into burning wrath.*" "How thoroughly could I give thee up!" *sc.* if I were to punish thy rebellion as it deserves. *Náthan*, to surrender to the power of the enemy, like *miggēn* in Gen. xiv. 20. And not that alone, but I could utterly destroy thee, like Admah and Zeboim, the two cities of the valley of Siddim, which were destroyed by fire from heaven along with Sodom and Gomorrhā. Compare Deut. xxix. 22, where Admah and Zeboim are expressly mentioned along with the cities of Sodom and Gomorrhā, which stand alone in Gen. xix. 24. With evident reference to this passage, in which Moses threatens idolatrous Israel with the same punishment, Hosea simply mentions the last two as quite sufficient for his purpose, whereas Sodom and Gomorrhā are generally mentioned in other passages (Jer. xlix. 18; cf. Matt. x. 15, Luke x. 12). The promise that God will show compassion is appended here, without any adversative particle. My heart has turned, changed in me (על, lit. upon or with me, as in the similar phrases in 1 Sam. xxv. 36, Jer. viii. 18). יָחַד בְּקָרִי, in a body have my feelings of compassion gathered themselves together, *i.e.* my whole compassion is excited. Compare Gen. xliii. 30 and 1 Kings iii. 26, where, instead of the abstract *nichūmīm*, we find the more definite *rachūmīm*, the bowels as the seat of the emotions. עָשָׂה חֲרֹן אַף, to carry out wrath, to execute it as judgment (as in 1 Sam. xxviii. 18). In the expression לֹא אָשׁוּב לְשַׁחַת, I will not return to destroy, אָשׁוּב may be explained from the previous נִחַמְתִּי לְבִי. After the heart of God has changed, it will not return to wrath, to destroy Ephraim; for Jehovah is God, who does not alter His purposes like a man (cf. 1 Sam. xv. 29, Num. xxiii. 19, Mal. iii. 6), and He shows

Himself in Israel as the Holy One, *i.e.* the absolutely pure and perfect one, in whom there is no alternation of light and darkness, and therefore no variableness in His decrees (see at Ex. xix. 6; Isa. vi. 3). The difficult expression עִיר cannot mean "into a city," although it is so rendered by the ancient versions, the Rabbins, and many Christian expositors; for we cannot attach any meaning to the words "I do not come into a city" at all in harmony with the context. עִיר signifies here *æstus iræ*, the heat of wrath, from עָרַר, *effervescere*, just as in Jer. xv. 8 it signifies the heat of alarm and anxiety, *æstus animi*.

Ver. 10. "*They will go after Jehovah; like a lion will He roar; for He will roar: and sons will tremble from the sea.*" Ver. 11. "*Tremble like birds out of Egypt, and like doves out of the land of Asshur: and I cause them to dwell in their houses, is the saying of Jehovah.*" When the Lord turns His pity towards the people once more, they will follow Him, and hasten, with trembling at His voice, from the lands of their banishment, and be reinstated by Him in their inheritance. The way for this promise was opened indeed by ver. 9, but here it is introduced quite abruptly, and without any logical particle of connection, like the same promise in ch. iii. 5. הָלַךְ אַחֲרַי, to walk after the Lord, denotes not only "obedience to the gathering voice of the Lord, as manifested by their drawing near" (Simson), but that walking in true obedience to the Lord which follows from conversion (Deut. xiii. 5; 1 Kings xiv. 8), so that the Chaldee has very properly rendered it, "They will follow the worship of Jehovah." This faithfulness they will exhibit first of all in practical obedience to the call of the Lord. This call is described as the roaring of a lion, the point of comparison lying simply in the fact that a lion announces its coming by roaring, so that the roaring merely indicates a loud, far-reaching call, like the blowing of the trumpet in Isa. xxvii. 13. The reason for what is affirmed is then given: "for He (Jehovah) will really utter His call," in consequence of which the Israelites, as His children, will come trembling (*châred* synonymous with *pâchad*, ch. iii. 5). כְּיָם, from the sea, *i.e.* from the distant islands and lands of the west (Isa. xi. 11), as well as from Egypt and Assyria, the lands of the south and east. These three regions are simply a special form of the idea, "out of all quarters of the globe;" compare the more

complete enumeration of the several remote countries in Isa. xi. 11. The comparison to birds and doves expresses the swiftness with which they draw near, as doves fly to their dovecots (Isa. lx. 8). Then will the Lord cause them to dwell in their houses, *i.e.* settle them once more in their inheritance, in His own land (cf. Jer. xxxii. 37, where לְבָיִת is added). On the construing of הָאֲשֵׁרִי with עַל, cf. 1 Kings xx. 43, and the German *auf der Stube sein*. The expression 'נָאֻם affixes the seal of confirmation to this promise. The fulfilment takes place in the last days, when Israel as a nation shall enter the kingdom of God. Compare the remarks on this point at ch. ii. 1-3 (pp. 49, 50).

### III. ISRAEL'S APOSTASY AND GOD'S FIDELITY.—

#### CHAP. XII.—XIV.

For the purpose of proving that the predicted destruction of the kingdom is just and inevitable, the prophet now shows, in this last division, first that Israel has not kept the ways of its father Jacob, but has fallen into the ungodly practice of Canaan (ch. xii.); and secondly, that in spite of all the manifestations of love, and all the chastisements received from its God, it has continued its apostasy and idolatry, and therefore perfectly deserves the threatened judgment. Nevertheless the compassion of God will not permit it to be utterly destroyed, but will redeem it even from death and hell (ch. xiii.—xiv. 1). To this there is appended, lastly, in ch. xiv. 2-9, a call to conversion, and a promise from God of the forgiveness and abundant blessing of those who turn to the Lord. With this the book closes (ch. xiv. 10). Thus we find again, that the contents of this last division fall very evidently into three parts (ch. xii. 13, 14, and xiv. 2-10), each of which is still further divisible into two strophes.

#### *Israel's Degeneracy into Canaanitish Ways.*—Chap. xii.

(Eng. Ver. xi. 12-xii.)

The faithlessness of Israel and Judah's resistance to God bring righteous punishment upon the entire posterity of Jacob (xi. 12-xii. 2); whereas the example of their forefather ought to have led them to faithful attachment to their God (vers. 3-6).

But Israel has become Canaan, and seeks its advantage in deception and injustice, without hearkening to its God or to the voice of its prophets, and will be punished for its idolatry (vers. 7-11). Whereas Jacob was obliged to flee, and to serve for a wife in Aram, Jehovah led Israel out of Egypt, and guarded it by prophets. Nevertheless this nation has excited His wrath, and will have to bear its guilt (vers. 12-14). The two strophes of this chapter are xi. 12-xii. 6 and 7-14.

Ch. xi. 12 (Heb. Bib. xii. 1). "*Ephraim has surrounded me with lying, and the house of Israel with deceit: and Judah is moreover unbridled against God, and against the faithful Holy One.*" Ch. xii. 1 (Heb. Bib. 2). "*Ephraim grazeth wind, and hunteth after the east: all the day it multiplies lying and desolation, and they make a covenant with Asshur, and oil is carried to Egypt.*" Ver. 2. "*And Jehovah has a controversy with Judah, and to perform a visitation upon Jacob, according to his ways: according to his works will He repay him.*" In the name of Jehovah, the prophet raises a charge against Israel once more. Lying and deceit are the terms which he applies, not so much to the idolatry which they preferred to the worship of Jehovah (ψευδῆ καὶ δυσσεβῆ λατρείαν, Theod.), as to the hypocrisy with which Israel, in spite of its idolatry, claimed to be still the people of Jehovah, pretended to worship Jehovah under the image of a calf, and turned right into wrong.<sup>1</sup> *Bēth Yisrā'el* (the house of Israel) is the nation of the ten tribes, and is synonymous with Ephraim. The statement concerning Judah has been interpreted in different ways, because the meaning of יְדָ is open to dispute. Luther's rendering, "but Judah still holds fast to its God," is based upon the rabbinical interpretation of יְדָ, in the sense of יְדָה, to rule, which is decidedly false. According to the Arabic رَاد, the meaning of *rād* is to ramble about (used of cattle that have broken loose, or have not yet been fastened up,

<sup>1</sup> Calvin explains סָבְבָנִי correctly thus: "that He (i.e. God) had experienced the manifold faithlessness of the Israelites in all kinds of ways." He interprets the whole sentence as follows: "The Israelites had acted unfaithfully towards God, and resorted to deceits, and that not in one way only, or of only one kind; but just as a man might surround his enemy with a great army, so had they gathered together innumerable frauds, with which they attacked God on every side."

as in Jer. ii. 31); *hiphil*, to cause to ramble about (Gen. xxvii. 40; Ps. lv. 3). Construed as it is here with עַם, it means to ramble about in relation to God, *i.e.* to be unbridled or unruly towards God. עַם, as in many other cases where reciprocal actions are referred to, standing towards or with a person: see Ewald, § 217, *h*. קְדוֹשִׁים נֶאֱמָן, the faithful, holy God. *Q'dōshim* is used of God, as in Prov. ix. 10 (cf. Josh. xxiv. 19), as an intensive *pluralis majestatis*, construed with a singular adjective (cf. Isa. xix. 4; 2 Kings xix. 4). נֶאֱמָן, firm, faithful, trustworthy; the opposite of *rād*. Judah is unbridled towards the powerful God (*El*), towards the Holy One, who, as the Faithful One, also proves Himself to be holy in relation to His people, both by the sanctification of those who embrace His salvation, and also by the judgment and destruction of those who obstinately resist the leadings of His grace. In ver. 1 the lying and deceit of Israel are more fully described. רָעָה רֵיחַ is not to entertain one's self on wind, *i.e.* to take delight in vain things; but רָעָה means to eat or graze spiritually; and *rāch*, the wind, is equivalent to emptiness. The meaning therefore is, to strive eagerly after what is empty or vain; synonymous with *rādaph*, to pursue. קָרִים, the east wind, in Palestine a fierce tempestuous wind, which comes with burning heat from the desert of Arabia, and is very destructive to seeds and plants (compare Job xxvii. 21, and Wetzstein's Appendix to Delitzsch's *Commentary on Job*). It is used, therefore, as a figurative representation, not of vain hopes and ideals, that cannot possibly be reached, but of that destruction which Israel is bringing upon itself. "All the day," *i.e.* continually, it multiplies lying and violence, through the sins enumerated in ch. iv. 2, by which the kingdom is being internally broken up. Added to this, there is the seeking for alliances with the powers of the world, viz. Assyria and Egypt, by which it hopes to secure their help (ch. v. 13), but only brings about its own destruction. Oil is taken to Egypt from the land abounding in olives (Deut. viii. 8; 1 Kings v. 25), not as tribute, but as a present, for the purpose of securing an ally in Egypt. This actually took place during the reign of Hoshea, who endeavoured to liberate himself from the oppression of Assyria by means of a treaty with Egypt (2 Kings xvii. 4).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Manger has given the meaning correctly thus: "He is looking back to the ambassadors sent by king Hoshea with splendid presents to the king



The Lord will repay both kingdoms for such conduct as this. But just as the attitude of Judah towards God is described more mildly than the guilt of Israel in ch. xi. 12, so the punishment of the two is differently described in ver. 2. Jehovah has a trial with Judah, *i.e.* He has to reprove and punish its sins and transgressions (ch. iv. 1). Upon Jacob, or Israel of the ten tribes (as in ch. x. 11), He has to perform a visitation, *i.e.* to punish it according to its ways and its deeds (cf. ch. iv. 9). וְיָבִיט, it is to be visited, *i.e.* He must visit.

Ver. 3. "*He held his brother's heel in the womb, and in his man's strength he fought with God.* Ver. 4. *He fought against the angel, and overcame; wept, and prayed to Him: at Bethel he found Him, and there He talked with us.* Ver. 5. *And Jehovah, God of hosts, Jehovah is His remembrance.*" The name Jacob, which refers to the patriarch himself in ver. 3, forms the link between vers. 2 and 3. The Israelites, as descendants of Jacob, were to strive to imitate the example of their forefather. His striving hard for the birthright, and his wrestling with God, in which he conquered by prayer and supplication, are types and pledges of salvation to the tribes of Israel which bear his name.<sup>1</sup> וְיָבִיט, a denom. from וָיָבַט, "to hold the heel" = וָיָבַט וְיָבִיט in Gen. xxv. 26, which the prophet has in his mind, not "to overreach," as in Gen. xxvii. 36 and Jer. ix. 3. For the wrestling with God, mentioned in the second clause of the verse, proves most indisputably that Jacob's conduct is not held up before the people for a warning, as marked by cunning or deceit, as Umbreit and Hitzig suppose, but is set before them for their imitation, as an eager attempt to secure the birthright and the

of Egypt, to bring him over to his side, and induce him to send him assistance against the king of Assyria, although he had bound himself by a sacred treaty to submit to the sovereignty of the latter." Compare also Hengstenberg's *Christology*, vol. i. p. 164 transl., where he refutes the current opinion, that the words refer to two different parties in the nation, viz. an Assyrian and an Egyptian party, and correctly describes the circumstances thus: "The people being severely oppressed by Asshur, sometimes apply to Egypt for help against Asshur, and at other times endeavour to awaken friendly feelings in the latter."

<sup>1</sup> "He shows what good Jacob received, and the son is named in the father: he calls to remembrance the ancient history, that they may see both the mercy of God towards Jacob, and his resolute firmness towards the Lord."—JEROME.

blessing connected with it. This shows at the same time, that the holding of the heel in the mother's womb is not quoted as a proof of the divine election of grace, and, in fact, that there is no reference at all to the circumstance, that "even when Jacob was still in his mother's womb, he did this not by his own strength, but by the mercy of God, who knows and loves those whom He has predestinated" (Jerome). בְּאוֹנוֹ, in his manly strength (cf. Gen. xlix. 3) he wrestled with God (Gen. xxxii. 25-29). This conflict (for the significance of which in relation to Jacob's spiritual life, see the discussion at Gen. l.c.) is more fully described in ver. 4, for the Israelites to imitate. מַלְאָךְ is the angel of Jehovah, the revealer of the invisible God (see the *Commentary on the Pentateuch*, vol. i. p. 126 transl.). יְהוָה is from Gen. xxxii. 29. The explanatory clause, "he wept, and made supplication to Him" (after Gen. xxxii. 27), gives the nature of the conflict. It was a contest with the weapons of prayer; and with these he conquered. These weapons are also at the command of the Israelites, if they will only use them. The fruit of the victory was, that he (Jacob) found Him (God) at Bethel. This does not refer to the appearance of God to Jacob on his flight to Mesopotamia (Gen. xxviii. 11), but to that recorded in Gen. xxxv. 9 sqq., when God confirmed his name of Israel, and renewed the promises of His blessing. And there, continues the prophet, He (God) spake with us; *i.e.* not there He speaks with us still, condemning by His prophets the idolatry at Bethel (Amos v. 4, 5), as Kimchi supposes; but, as the imperfect דִּבֶּר corresponds to יִמְצָאֵנִי, "there did He speak to us through Jacob," *i.e.* what He there said to Jacob applies to us.<sup>1</sup> The explanation of this is given in ver. 5, where the name is recalled in which God revealed Himself to Moses, when He first called him (Ex. iii. 15), *i.e.* in which He made known to him His true nature. *Y'hōvâh zikhrō* is taken literally from יְהוָה זִכְרִי לְךָ; but there the name *Jehovah* is still further defined by "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," here by

<sup>1</sup> "Let it be carefully observed, that God is said to have talked at Bethel not with Jacob only, but with all his posterity. That is to say, the things which are here said to have been done by Jacob, and to have happened to him, had not regard to himself only, but to all the race that sprang from him, and were signs of the good fortune which they either would, or certainly might enjoy" (Lackemacher in Rosenmüller's *Scholia*).

“the God of hosts.” This difference needs consideration. The Israelites in the time of Moses could only put full confidence in the divine call of Moses to be their deliverer out of the bondage of Egypt, on the ground that He who called him was the God who had manifested Himself to the patriarchs as the God of salvation; but for the Israelites of Hosea’s time, the strength of their confidence in Jehovah arose from the fact that Jehovah was the God of hosts, *i.e.* the God who, because He commands the forces of heaven, both visible and invisible, rules with unrestricted omnipotence on earth as well as in heaven (see at 1 Sam. i. 3).

To this God Israel is now to return. Ver. 6. “*And thou, to thy God shalt thou turn: keep love and right, and hope continually in thy God.*” אֱשׂ with ך is a pregnant expression, as in Isa. x. 22: “so to turn as to enter into vital fellowship with God;” *i.e.* to be truly converted. The next two clauses, as the omission of the copula before *chesed* and the change in the tense clearly show, are to be taken as explanatory of אֱשׂ. The conversion is to show itself in the perception of love and right towards their brethren, and in constant trust in God. But Israel is far removed from this now. This thought leads the way to the next strophe (vers. 8–15), which commences afresh with a disclosure of the apostasy of the people.

Ver. 7. “*Canaan, in his hand is the scale of cheating: he loves to oppress.*” Ver. 8. “*And Ephraim says, Yet I have become rich, have acquired property: all my exertions bring me no wrong, which would be sin.*” Israel is not a Jacob who wrestles with God; but it has become Canaan, seeking its advantage in deceit and wrong. Israel is called *Canaan* here, not so much on account of its attachment to Canaanitish idolatry (cf. Ezek. xvi. 3), as according to the appellative meaning of the word *K<sup>na</sup>an*, which is borrowed from the commercial habits of the Canaanites (Phœnicians), viz. merchant or trader (Isa. xxiii. 8; Job xl. 30), because, like a fraudulent merchant, it strove to become great by oppression and cheating; not “because it acted towards God like a fraudulent merchant, offering Him false show for true reverence,” as Schmieder supposes. For however thoroughly this may apply to the worship of the Israelites, it is not to this that the prophet refers, but to fraudulent weights, and the love of oppression or violence. And this

points not to their attitude towards God, but to their conduct towards their fellow-men, which is the very opposite of what, according to the previous verse, the Lord requires (*chesed umishpāt*), and the very thing which He has forbidden in the law, in Lev. xix. 36, Deut. xxv. 13-16, and also in the case of *'āshaq*, violence, in Lev. vi. 2-4, Deut. xxiv. 14. Ephraim prides itself upon this unrighteousness, in the idea that it has thereby acquired wealth and riches, and with the still greater self-deception, that with all its acquisition of property it has committed no wrong that was sin, *i.e.* that would be followed by punishment. *אֶס* does not mean "might" here, but wealth, *opes*, although as a matter of fact, since Ephraim says this as a nation, the riches and power of the state are intended. *כָּל־יְיָ* is not written at the head absolutely, in the sense of "so far as what I have acquired is concerned, men find no injustice in this;" for if that were the case, *בִּי* would stand for *לִי*; but it is really the subject, and *מִמֶּנִּי* is to be taken in the sense of acquiring = bringing in (cf. Lev. v. 7, xii. 8, etc.).

Ver. 9. "*Yet am I Jehovah thy God, from the land of Egypt hither: I will still cause thee to dwell in tents, as in the days of the feast.*" Ver. 10. *I have spoken to the prophets; and I, I have multiplied visions, and spoken similitudes through the prophets.* Ver. 11. *If Gilead (is) worthlessness, they have only come to nothing: in Gilgal they offered bullocks: even their altars are like stone-heaps in the furrows of the field.*" The Lord meets the delusion of the people, that they had become great and powerful through their own exertion, by reminding them that *He* (*אֲנִי* is adversative, yet I) has been Israel's God from Egypt hither, and that to Him they owe all prosperity and good in both past and present (cf. ch. xiii. 4). Because they do not recognise this, and because they put their trust in unrighteousness rather than in Him, He will now cause them to dwell in tents again, as in the days of the feast of Tabernacles, *i.e.* will repeat the leading through the wilderness. It is evident from the context that *mō'ed* (the feast) is here the feast of Tabernacles. *יְמֵי מוֹעֵד* (the days of the feast) are the seven days of this festival, during which Israel was to dwell in booths, in remembrance of the fact that when God led them out of Egypt He had caused them to dwell in booths (tabernacles, Lev. xxiii. 42, 43). *עַל אֲשֵׁיכֶם* stands in antithesis to *הַתְּשֻׁבָּה*

in Lev. xxiii. 43. "The preterite is changed into a future through the ingratitude of the nation" (Hengstenberg). The simile, "as in the days of the feast," shows that the repetition of the leading through the desert is not thought of here merely as a time of punishment, such as the prolongation of the sojourn of the Israelites in the wilderness for forty years really was (Num. xiv. 33). For their dwelling in tents, or rather in booths (*sukkoth*), on the feast of Tabernacles, was intended not so much to remind the people of the privations of their unsettled wandering life in the desert, as to call to their remembrance the shielding and sheltering care and protection of God in their wandering through the great and terrible wilderness (see at Lev. xxiii. 42, 43). We must combine the two allusions, therefore: so that whilst the people are threatened indeed with being driven out of the good and glorious land, with its large and beautiful cities and houses full of all that is good (Deut. vi. 10 sqq.), into a dry and barren desert, they have also set before them the repetition of the divine guidance through the desert; so that they are not threatened with utter rejection on the part of God, but only with temporary banishment into the desert. In vers. 10 and 11 the two thoughts of ver. 9 are still further expanded. In ver. 10 they are reminded how the Lord had proved Himself to be the God of Israel from Egypt onwards, by sending prophets and multiplying prophecy, to make known His will and gracious counsel to the people, and to promote their salvation. *אֶל־יְהוָה* with *עַל*, to speak to, not because the word is something imposed *upon* a person, but because the inspiration of God came down to the prophets from above. *אֶרְפָּה*, not "I destroy," for it is only the *kal* that occurs in this sense, and not the *piel*, but "to compare," i.e. speak in similes; as, for example, in ch. i. and iii., Isa. v. 1 sqq., Ezek. xvi. etc.: "I have left no means of admonishing them untried" (Rosenmüller). Israel, however, has not allowed itself to be admonished and warned, but has given itself up to sin and idolatry, the punishment of which cannot be delayed. Gilead and Gilgal represent the two halves of the kingdom of the ten tribes; Gilead the land to the east of the Jordan, and Gilgal the territory to the west. As Gilead is called "a city (i.e. a rendezvous) of evil-doers" (*עִיר־רָעָה*) in ch. vi. 8, so is it here called distinctly *רָעָה*, worthlessness, wickedness;

and therefore it is to be utterly brought to nought. נִשְׁוֵה and נִשְׁוֵה are synonymous, denoting moral and physical nonentity (compare Job xv. 31). Here the two notions are so distributed, that the former denotes the moral decay, the latter the physical. Worthlessness brings nothingness after it as a punishment. נִשְׁוֵה, only = nothing, but equivalent to utterly. The perfect יִהְיֶה is used for the certain future. Gilgal, which is mentioned in ch. iv. 15, ix. 15, as the seat of one form of idolatrous worship, is spoken of here as a place of sacrifice, to indicate with a play upon the name the turning of the altars into heaps of stones (*Gallim*). The desolation or destruction of the altars involves not only the cessation of the idolatrous worship, but the dissolution of the kingdom and the banishment of the people out of the land. שָׁרִים, which only occurs in the plural here, cannot of course be the dative (to sacrifice to oxen), but only the accusative. The sacrifice of oxen was reckoned as a sin on the part of the people, not on account of the animals offered, but on account of the unlawful place of sacrifice. The suffix to *mizb'chōthām* (their sacrifices) refers to Israel, the subject implied in *zibbēchū*.

This punishment Israel well deserved. Ver. 12. "*And Jacob fled to the fields of Aram; and Israel served for a wife, and for a wife did he keep guard.*" Ver. 13. "*And through a prophet Jehovah brought Israel out of Egypt, and through a prophet was he guarded.*" Ver. 14. "*Ephraim has stirred up bitter wrath; and his Lord will leave his blood upon him, and turn back his shame upon him.*" In order to show the people still more impressively what great things the Lord had done for them, the prophet recalls the flight of Jacob, the tribe-father, to Mesopotamia, and how he was obliged to serve many years there for a wife, and to guard cattle; whereas God had redeemed Israel out of the Egyptian bondage, and had faithfully guarded it through a prophet. The flight of Jacob to Aramæa, and his servitude there, are mentioned not "to give prominence to his zeal for the blessing of the birthright, and his obedience to the commandment of God and his parents" (Cyr., Theod., Th. v. Mops.); nor "to bring out the double servitude of Israel,—the first the one which the people had to endure in their forefather, the second the one which they had to endure themselves in Egypt" (Umbreit); nor "to lay stress

upon the manifestation of the divine care towards Jacob as well as towards the people of Israel" (Ewald); for there is nothing at all about this in ver. 12. The words point simply to the distress and affliction which Jacob had to endure, according to Gen. xxix.-xxxi., as Calvin has correctly interpreted them. "Their father Jacob," he says, "who was he? what was his condition? . . . He was a fugitive from his country. Even if he had always lived at home, his father was only a stranger in the land. But he was compelled to flee into Syria. And how splendidly did he live there? He was with his uncle, no doubt, but he was treated quite as meanly as any common slave: *he served for a wife*. And how did he serve? He was the man who tended the cattle." *Shâmar*, the tending of cattle, was one of the hardest and lowest descriptions of servitude (cf. Gen. xxx. 31, xxxi. 40; 1 Sam. xvii. 20). *S'dêh 'ârâm* (the field of Aram) is no doubt simply the Hebrew rendering of the Aramæan *Paddan-'ârâm* (Gen. xxviii. 2, xxxi. 18: see at Gen. xxv. 20). Jacob's flight to Aramæa, where he had to serve, is contrasted in ver. 10 with the leading of Israel, the people sprung from Jacob, out of Egypt by a prophet, *i.e.* by Moses (cf. Deut. xviii. 18); and the guarding of cattle by Jacob is placed in contrast with the guarding of Israel on the part of God through the prophet Moses, when he led them through the wilderness to Canaan. The object of this is to call to the nation's remembrance that elevation from the lowest condition, which they were to acknowledge with humility every year, according to Deut. xxvi. 5 sqq., when the first-fruits were presented before the Lord. For Ephraim had quite forgotten this. Instead of thanking the Lord for it by love and faithful devotedness to Him, it had provoked Him in the bitterest manner by its sins (הִכְעִים, to excite wrath, to provoke to anger: *tamrûrîm*, an adverbial accusative = bitterly). For this should its blood-guiltiness remain upon it. According to Lev. xx. 9 sqq., *dâmîm* denotes grave crimes that are punishable by death. *Nâtash*, to let a thing alone, as in Ex. xxiii. 11; or to leave behind, as in 1 Sam. xvii. 20, xxii. 28. Leaving blood-guiltiness upon a person, is the opposite of taking away (נָשָׂא) or forgiving the sin, and therefore inevitably brings the punishment after it. *Cherpâtho* (its reproach or dishonour) is the dishonour which Ephraim had done to the Lord by sin and

idolatry (cf. Isa. lxxv. 7). And this would be repaid to it by its Lord, *i.e.* by Jehovah.

*Israel's deep Fall.*—Chap. xiii.—xiv. 1.

Because Israel would not desist from its idolatry, and entirely forgot the goodness of its God, He would destroy its might and glory (vers. 1–8). Because it did not acknowledge the Lord as its help, its throne would be annihilated along with its capital; but this judgment would become to all that were penitent a regeneration to newness of life. Ver. 1. “*When Ephraim spake, there was terror; he exalted himself in Israel; then he offended through Baal, and died.*” Ver. 2. “*And now they continue to sin, and make themselves molten images out of their silver, idols according to their understanding: manufacture of artists is it all: they say of them, Sacrificers of men: let them kiss calves.*” In order to show how deeply Israel had fallen through its apostasy, the prophet points to the great distinction which the tribe of Ephraim formerly enjoyed among the tribes of Israel. The two clauses of ver. 1a cannot be so connected together as that שָׁחַד should be taken as the continuation of the infinitive יָצַח. The emphatic הִנֵּה is irreconcilable with this. We must rather take יָצַח (ἀπ. λεγ., in Aramæan = שָׁחַד, Jer. xlix. 24, terror, tremor) as the apodosis to *k’dabbēr* ‘Ephraim (when Ephraim spake), like שָׁחַד in Gen. iv. 7: “As Ephraim spake there was terror,” *i.e.* men listened with fear and trembling (cf. Job xxix. 21). שָׁחַד is used intransitively, as in Nahum i. 5, Ps. lxxxix. 10. Ephraim, *i.e.* the tribe of Ephraim, “exalted itself in Israel,”—not “it was distinguished among its brethren” (Hitzig), but “it raised itself to the government.” The prophet has in his mind the attempts made by Ephraim to get the rule among the tribes, which led eventually to the secession of the ten tribes from the royal family of David, and the establishment of the kingdom of Israel by the side of that of Judah. When Ephraim had secured this, the object of its earnest endeavours, it offended through Baal; *i.e.* not only through the introduction of the worship of Baal in the time of Ahab (1 Kings xvi. 31 sqq.), but even through the establishment of the worship of the calves under Jeroboam (1 Kings xii. 28), through which Jehovah was



turned into a Baal. **וְהָיָה**, used of the state or kingdom, is equivalent to "was given up to destruction" (cf. Amos ii. 2). The dying commenced with the introduction of the unlawful worship (cf. 1 Kings xii. 30). From this sin Ephraim (the people of the ten tribes) did not desist: they still continue to sin, and make themselves molten images, etc., contrary to the express prohibition in Lev. xix. 4 (cf. Ex. xx. 4). These words are not merely to be understood as signifying, that they added other idolatrous images in Gilgal and Beersheba to the golden calves (Amos viii. 14); but they also involve their obstinate adherence to the idolatrous worship introduced by Jeroboam (compare 2 Kings xvii. 16). **וְהָיָה בְּתַבְנִיתָהּ** from **תַּבְנִיתָהּ**, with the feminine termination dropped on account of the suffix (according to Ewald, § 257, *d*; although in the note Ewald regards this formation as questionable, and doubts the correctness of the reading): "according to their understanding," i.e. their proficiency in art. The meaning of the second hemistich, which is very difficult, depends chiefly upon the view we take of **וְהָיָה אֲדָם**, viz. whether we render these words "they who sacrifice men," as the LXX., the fathers, and many of the rabbins and Christian expositors have done; or "the sacrificers of (among) men," as Kimchi, Bochart, Ewald, and others do, after the analogy of **אֲדָם אֲבִינִי** in Isa. xxix. 19. Apart from this, however, *zōbh'chē 'ādām* cannot possibly be taken as an independent sentence, such as "they sacrifice men," or "human sacrificers are they," unless with the LXX. we change the participle **וְהָיָה** arbitrarily into the perfect **וָהָיָה**. As the words read, they must be connected either with what follows or with what precedes. But if we connect them with what follows, we fail to obtain any suitable thought, whether we render it "human sacrificers (those who sacrifice men) kiss calves," or "the sacrificers among men kiss calves." The former is open to the objection that human sacrifices were not offered to the calves (i.e. to Jehovah, as worshipped under the symbol of a calf), but only to Moloch, and that the worshippers of Moloch did not kiss calves. The latter, "men who offer sacrifice kiss calves," might indeed be understood in this sense, that the prophet intended thereby to denounce the great folly, that men should worship animals; but this does not suit the preceding words **הֵם אֲמָרִים**, and it is impossible to see in what sense they could be employed. There is no other course left,

therefore, than to connect *zôbh'chê 'âdâm* with what precedes, though not in the way proposed by Ewald, viz. "even to these do sacrificers of men say." This rendering is open to the following objections: (1) that הָאֵל after הֵם would have to be taken as an emphatic repetition of the pronoun, and we cannot find any satisfactory ground for this; and, (2) what is still more important, the fact that *'âmar* would be used absolutely, in the sense of "they speak in prayer," which, even apart from the "prayer," cannot be sustained by any other analogous example. These difficulties vanish if we take *zôbh'chê 'âdâm* as an explanatory apposition to *hên*: "of them (the *'âtsabbîm*) they say, viz. the sacrificers from among men (i.e. men who sacrifice), Let them worship calves." By the apposition *zôbh'chê 'âdâm*, and the fact that the object *'âgâlîm* is placed first, so that it stands in immediate contrast to *'âdâm*, the absurdity of men kissing calves, i.e. worshipping them with kisses (see at 1 Kings xix. 18), is painted as it were before the eye.

They prepare for themselves swift destruction in consequence. Ver. 3. "*Therefore will they be like the morning cloud, and like the dew that passes early away, as chaff blows away from the threshing-floor, and as smoke out of the window.*" *Lâkhên*, therefore, viz. because they would not let their irrational idolatry go, they would quickly perish. On the figures of the morning cloud and dew, see at ch. vi. 4. The figure of the chaff occurs more frequently (vid. Isa. xvii. 13, xli. 15, 16; Ps. i. 4, xxxv. 5, etc.). יִסָּעֵר is used relatively: which is stormed away, i.e. blown away from the threshing-floor by a violent wind. The threshing-floors were situated upon eminences (compare my *Bibl. Archäol.* ii. p. 114). "Smoke out of the window," i.e. smoke from the fire under a saucepan in the room, which passed out of the window-lattice, as the houses were without chimneys (see Ps. lxxiii. 3).

Ver. 4. "*And yet I am Jehovah thy God from the land of Egypt hither; and thou knowest no God beside me, and there is no helper beside me.*" Ver. 5. "*I knew thee in the desert, in the land of burning heats.*" As in ch. xii. 10, a contrast is drawn here again between the idolatry of the people and the uninterrupted self-attestation of Jehovah to the faithless nation. From Egypt hither Israel has known no other God than Jehovah, i.e. has found no other God to be a helper and

Saviour. Even in the desert He knew Israel, *i.e.* adopted it in love. יָדַע, to know, when applied to God, is an attestation of His love and care (compare Amos iii. 2; Isa. lviii. 3, etc.). The

אִם. לֵעָרָא. מִלְּאִיבָה, from לֵאב, לָב, *med.* Vav, to thirst, signifies burning heat, in which men famish with thirst (for the fact, compare Deut. viii. 15).

But prosperity made Israel proud, so that it forgot its God. Ver. 6. "*As they had their pasture, they became full; they became full, and their heart was lifted up: therefore have they forgotten me.*" This reproof is taken almost word for word from Deut. viii. 11 sqq. (cf. ch. xxxi. 20, xxxii. 15 sqq.). בְּמִרְעֵיהֶם, answering to their pasture, *i.e.* because they had such good pasture in the land given them by the Lord. The very thing of which Moses warned the people in Deut. viii. 11 has come to pass. Therefore are the threats of the law against the rebellious fulfilled upon them.

Ver. 7. "*And I became like a lion to them; as a leopard by the wayside do I lie in wait.* Ver. 8. *I fall upon them as a bear robbed of its young, and tear in pieces the enclosure of their heart, and eat them there like a lioness: the beast of the field will tear them in pieces.*" The figure of the pasture which made Israel full (ver. 6) is founded upon the comparison of Israel to a flock (cf. ch. iv. 16). The chastisement of the people is therefore represented as the tearing in pieces and devouring of the fattened flock by wild beasts. God appears as a lion, panther, etc., which fall upon them (cf. ch. v. 14). יָאֵרִי does not stand for the future, but is the preterite, giving the consequence of forgetting God. The punishment has already begun, and will still continue; we have therefore from אָשִׁיר onwards imperfects or futures. אָשִׁיר, from שָׁרַר, to look round, hence to lie in wait, as in Jer. v. 26. It is not to be changed into 'Asshur, as it is by the LXX. and Vulgate. מְנוּרֵי לֵבָם, the enclosure of their heart, *i.e.* their breast. *Shâm* (there) points back to 'al-derekh (by the way).

Ver. 9 commences a new strophe, in which the prophet once more discloses to the people the reason for their corruption (vers. 9-13); and after pointing to the saving omnipotence of the Lord (ver. 14), holds up before them utter destruction as the just punishment for their guilt (ver. 15 and ch. xiv. 1).

Ver. 9. "*O Israel, it hurls thee into destruction, that thou (art) against me, thy help.*" Ver. 10. *Where is thy king? that he may help thee in all thy cities: and (where) thy judges? of whom thou saidst, Give me king and princes!*" Ver. 11. *I give thee kings in my anger, and take them away in my wrath.*" שְׁחֵתֵת does not combine together the verbs in ver. 8, as Hitzig supposes; nor does ver. 9 give the reason for what precedes, but *shichethkhâ* is explained by ver. 10, from which we may see that a new train of thought commences with ver. 9. *Shichêth* does not mean to act corruptly here, as in Deut. xxxii. 5, ix. 12, and Ex. xxxii. 7, but to bring into corruption, to ruin, as in Gen. vi. 17, ix. 15, Num. xxxii. 15, etc. The sentence כִּי בִי וְגו' cannot be explained in any other way than by supplying the pronoun אֲנִי, as a subject taken from the suffix to שְׁחֵתֵת (Marck, and nearly all the modern commentators). "This throws thee into distress, that thou hast resisted me, who am thy help." כִּי בְעֵזְרִי: as in Deut. xxxiii. 26, except that ב is used in the sense of against, as in Gen. xvi. 12, 2 Sam. xxiv. 17, etc. This opposition did not take place, however, when all Israel demanded a king of Samuel (1 Sam. viii. 5). For although this desire is represented there (ver. 7) as the rejection of Jehovah, Hosea is speaking here simply of the Israel of the ten tribes. The latter rebelled against Jehovah, when they fell away from the house of David, and made Jeroboam their king, and with contempt of Jehovah put their trust in the might of their kings of their own choosing (1 Kings xii. 16 sqq.). But these kings could not afford them any true help. The question, "Where" ('*ēhî* only occurs here and twice in ver. 14, for אִי or אֵיה, possibly simply from a dialectical variation—*vid.* Ewald, § 104, c—and is strengthened by אִפֹּס, as in Job xvii. 15), "Where is thy king, that he may help thee?" does not presuppose that Israel had no king at all at that time, and that the kingdom was in a state of anarchy, but simply that it had no king who could save it, when the foe, the Assyrian, attacked it in all its cities. Before *shōph<sup>e</sup>teykhâ* (thy judges) we must repeat '*ēhî* (where). The *shōph<sup>e</sup>tīm*, as the use of the word *sārīm* (princes) in its stead in the following clause clearly shows, are not simple judges, but royal counsellors and ministers, who managed the affairs of the kingdom along with the king, and superintended the administration of justice. The

saying, "Give me a king and princes," reminds us very forcibly of the demand of the people in the time of Samuel; but they really refer simply to the desire of the ten tribes for a king of their own, which manifested itself in their dissatisfaction with the rule of the house of David, and their consequent secession, and to their persistence in this secession amidst all the subsequent changes of the government. We cannot therefore take the imperfects וַיִּקְרָא and וַיִּמָּוֶת in ver. 11 as pure preterites, i.e. we cannot understand them as referring simply to the choice of Jeroboam as king, and to his death. The imperfects denote an action that is repeated again and again, for which we should use the present, and refer to all the kings that the kingdom of the ten tribes had received and was receiving still, and to their removal. God in His wrath gives the sinful nation kings and takes them away, in order to punish the nation through its kings. This applies not merely to the kings who followed one another so rapidly through conspiracy and murder, although through these the kingdom was gradually broken up and its dissolution accelerated, but to the rulers of the ten tribes as a whole. God gave the tribes who were discontented with the theocratical government of David and Solomon a king of their own, that He might punish them for their resistance to His government, which came to light in the rebellion against Rehoboam. He suspended the division of the kingdom not only over Solomon, as a punishment for his idolatry, but also over the rebellious ten tribes, who, when they separated themselves from the royal house to which the promise had been given of everlasting duration, were also separated from the divinely appointed worship and altar, and given up into the power of their kings, who hurled one another from the throne; and God took away this government from them to chastise them for their sins, by giving them into the power of the heathen, and by driving them away from His face. It is to this last thought, that what follows is attached. The removal of the king in wrath would occur, because the sin of Ephraim was reserved for punishment.

Ver. 12. "*The guilt of Ephraim is bound together: his sin is preserved.*" Ver. 13. "*The pains of a travailing woman come upon him: he is an unwise son; that he does not place himself at the time in the breaking forth of children.*" Ver. 12 is a special

application of Deut. xxxii. 34 to the ten tribes. *Tsárur*, bound up in a bundle, like a thing which you wish to take great care of (compare Job xiv. 17; 1 Sam. xxv. 29). The same thing is applied in *tsáphán*, hidden, carefully preserved, so as not to be lost (Job xxi. 19). "All their sins are preserved for punishment" (Chald.). Therefore will pains overtake Ephraim like a woman in labour. The pains of childbirth are not merely a figurative representation of violent agony, but of the sufferings and calamities connected with the refining judgments of God, by which new life was to be born, and a complete transformation of all things effected (cf. Mic. iv. 9, 10; Isa. xiii. 8, xxvi. 17; Matt. xxiv. 8). He cannot be spared these pains, for he is a foolish son (cf. Deut. xxxii. 6, 28 sqq.). But in what respect? This is explained in the words בִּי עַתָּה וְנִי, "for at the time," or as עַתָּה cannot stand for לְעַתָּה, more correctly "when it is time," he does not place himself in, *i.e.* does not enter, the opening of the womb. *Mishbar bânim* is to be explained as in 2 Kings xix. 3 and Isa. xxxvii. 3; and עֶבֶר c. ג. as in Ezek. xxii. 30. If the child does not come to the opening at the right time, the birth is retarded, and the life of both mother and child endangered. The mother and child are one person here. And this explains the transition from the pains of the mother to the behaviour of the child at the time of birth. Ephraim is an unwise son, inasmuch as even under the chastening judgment he still delays his conversion, and will not let himself be new-born, like a child, that at the time of the labour-pains will not enter the opening of the womb and so come to the birth.

But in order to preserve believers from despair, the Lord announces in ver. 14 that He will nevertheless redeem His people from the power of death. Ver. 14. "*Out of the hand of hell will I redeem them; from death will I set them free! Where are thy plagues, O death? where thy destruction, O hell! Repentance is hidden from mine eyes.*" The fact that this verse contains a promise, and not a threat, would hardly have been overlooked by so many commentators, if they had not been led, out of regard to vers. 13, 15, to put force upon the words, and either take the first clauses as interrogative, "Should I . . . redeem?" (Calvin and others), or as conditional, "I would redeem them," with "*si resipiscerent*" supplied (Kimchi, Sal.

b. Mel. Ros., etc.). But apart from the fact that the words supplied are perfectly arbitrary, with nothing at all to indicate them, both of these explanations are precluded by the sentences which follow; for the questions, "Where are thy plagues, O death?" etc., are obviously meant to affirm the conquest or destruction of hell and death. And this argument retains its force even if we take מְאִי as an optative from מָיִן, without regard to ver. 10, since the thought, "I should like to be thy plague, O death," presupposes that deliverance from the power of death is affirmed in what comes before. But, on account of the style of address, we cannot take מְאִי even as an interrogative, in the sense of "Should I be," etc. And what would be the object of this gradation of thought, if the redemption from death were only hypothetical, or were represented as altogether questionable? If we take the words as they stand, therefore, it is evident that they affirm something more than deliverance when life is in danger, or preservation from death. To redeem or ransom from the hand (or power) of hell, *i.e.* of the under world, the realm of death, is equivalent to depriving hell of its prey, not only by not suffering the living to die, but by bringing back to life those who have fallen victims to hell, *i.e.* to the region of the dead. The cessation or annihilation of death is expressed still more forcibly in the triumphant words: "Where are thy plagues (pestilences), O death? where thy destruction, O hell?" of which Theodoret has aptly observed, *παιανίζειν κατὰ τοῦ θανάτου κελεύει*. מְאִי is an intensive plural of *debher*, plague, pestilence, and is to be explained in accordance with Ps. xci. 6, where we also find the synonym לִמָּוֶת in the form לִמָּוֶת, pestilence or destruction. The Apostle Paul has therefore very properly quoted these words in 1 Cor. xv. 55, in combination with the declaration in Isa. xxv. 8, "Death is swallowed up in victory," to confirm the truth, that at the resurrection of the last day, death will be annihilated, and that which is corruptible changed into immortality. We must not restrict the substance of this promise, however, to the ultimate issue of the redemption, in which it will receive its complete fulfilment. The suffixes attached to *'ephdēm* and *'eḡ'ālēm* point to Israel of the ten tribes, like the verbal suffixes in ver. 8. Consequently the promised redemption from death must stand in intimate connection with the threatened destruction of the

kingdom of Israel. Moreover, the idea of the resurrection of the dead was by no means so clearly comprehended in Israel at that time, as that the prophet could point believers to it as a ground of consolation when the kingdom was destroyed. The only meaning that the promise had for the Israelites of the prophet's day, was that the Lord possessed the power even to redeem from death, and raise Israel from destruction into newness of life; just as Ezekiel (ch. xxxvii.) depicts the restoration of Israel as the giving of life to the dry bones that lay scattered about the field. The full and deeper meaning of these words was but gradually unfolded to believers under the Old Testament, and only attained complete and absolute certainty for all believers through the actual resurrection of Christ. But in order to anticipate all doubt as to this exceedingly great promise, the Lord adds, "repentance is hidden from mine eyes," *i.e.* my purpose of salvation will be irrevocably accomplished. The ἀπ. λει. *nōcham* does not mean "resentment" (Ewald), but, as a derivative of *nicham*, simply consolation or repentance. The former, which the Septuagint adopts, does not suit the context, which the latter alone does. The words are to be interpreted in accordance with Ps. lxxxix. 36 and Ps. cx. 4, where the oath of God is still further strengthened by the words וְלֹא יִנָּחֵם, "and will not repent;" and לֹא יִנָּחֵם corresponds to אֲנִי אֶחָיִךְ in Ps. lxxxix. 36 (Marck and Krabbe, *Question. de Hos. vatic. spec.* p. 47). Compare 1 Sam. xv. 29 and Num. xxiii. 19.

Ver. 15. "*For he will bear fruit among brethren. East wind will come, a wind of Jehovah, rising up from the desert; and his fountain will dry up, and his spring become dried. He plunders the treasures of all splendid vessels.*" The connection between the first clause and the previous verse has been correctly pointed out by Marck. "Ver. 15," he says, "adduces a reason to prove that the promised grace of redemption would certainly stand firm." וְ cannot be either a particle of time or of condition here (when, or if); for neither of them yields a suitable thought, since Ephraim neither was at that time, nor could become, fruit-bearing among brethren. Ewald's hypothetical view, "Should Ephraim be a fruitful child," cannot be grammatically sustained, since *kî* is only used in cases where a circumstance is assumed to be real. For one that is merely supposed to be possible, אֲנִי is required, as the interchange of



דָּם and 'ב, in Num. v. 19, 20, for example, clearly shows. The meaning of דָּם is placed beyond all doubt by the evident play upon the name *Ephraim*; and this also explains the writing with ד instead of ב, as well as the idea of the sentence itself: Ephraim will bear fruit among the brethren, *i.e.* the other tribes, as its name, double-fruitfulness, affirms (see at Gen. xli. 52). This thought, through which the redemption from death set before Israel is confirmed, is founded not only upon the assumption that the name must become a truth, but chiefly upon the blessing which the patriarch promised to the tribe of Ephraim on the ground of its name, both in Gen. xlviii. 4, 20, and Gen. xlix. 22 sqq. Because Ephraim possessed such a pledge of blessing in its very name, the Lord would not let it be overwhelmed for ever in the tempest that was bursting upon it. The same thing applies to the name Ephraim as to the name Israel, with which it is used as synonymous; and what is true of all the promises of God is true of this announcement also, *viz.* that they are only fulfilled in the case of those who adhere to the conditions under which they were given. Of Ephraim, those only will bear fruit which abides to everlasting life, who walk as true champions for God in the footsteps of faith and of their forefathers, wrestling for the blessing of the promises. On the other hand, upon the Ephraim that has turned into Canaan (ch. xii. 8) an east wind will come, a tempest bursting from the desert (see at ch. xii. 2), and that a stormy wind raised by Jehovah, which will dry up his spring, *i.e.* destroy not only the fruitful land with which God has blessed it (Deut. xxxiii. 13-16), but all the sources of its power and stability. Like the promise in ver. 14, the threatening of the judgment, to which the kingdom of Israel is to succumb, is introduced quite abruptly with the word יָבִיא. The figurative style of address then passes in the last clause into a literal threat. הָיָה, he, the hostile conqueror, sent as a tempestuous wind by the Lord, *viz.* the Assyrian, will plunder the treasure of all costly vessels, *i.e.* all the treasures and valuables of the kingdom. On *k'ti chemdâh* compare Nah. ii. 10 and 2 Chron. xxxii. 27. We understand by it chiefly the treasures of the capital, to which a serious catastrophe is more especially predicted in the next verse (ch. xiv. 1), which also belongs to this strophe, on account of its rebellion against God.

Ver. 16. (Heb. Bib. ch. xiv. 1). "*Samaria will atone, because it has rebelled against its God: they will fall by the sword; their children will be dashed to pieces, and its women with child ripped up.*" אָשָׁם, to atone, to bear the guilt, i.e. the punishment. It is not equivalent to *shāmēm* in Ezek. vi. 6, although, as a matter of fact, the expiation consisted in the conquest and devastation of Samaria by Shalmanezzer. The subject to *yippēlū* (will fall) is the inhabitants of Samaria. The suffix to הָרִיחוּ (its women, etc.) refers to the nation. The form הָרִיחַ is one derived from הָרַח, for הָרַח (Ewald, § 189, c). The construction with the masculine verb בָּקָעַי, in the place of the feminine, is an anomaly, which may be explained from the fact that feminine formations from the *plur. imperf.* are generally very rare (see Ewald, § 191, b). For the fact itself, compare ch. x. 14; 2 Kings viii. 12, xv. 16; Amos i. 13.

*Israel's Conversion and Pardon.*—Chap. xiv.

After the prophet has set before the sinful nation in various ways its own guilt, and the punishment that awaits it, viz. the destruction of the kingdom, he concludes his addresses with a call to thorough conversion to the Lord, and the promise that the Lord will bestow His grace once more upon those who turn to Him, and will bless them abundantly (vers. 1–8). Ver. 1. (Heb. Bib. ver. 2). "*Return, O Israel, to Jehovah thy God; for thou hast stumbled through thy guilt.*" Ver. 2. "*Take with you words, and turn to Jehovah; say ye to Him, Forgive all guilt, and accept what is good, that we may offer our lips as bullocks.*" Ver. 3. "*Asshur will not help us: we will not ride upon horses, nor say 'Our God' any more to the manufacture of our own hands; for with Thee the orphan findeth compassion.*" There is no salvation for fallen man without return to God. It is therefore with a call to return to the Lord their God, that the prophet opens the announcement of the salvation with which the Lord will bless His people, whom He has brought to reflection by means of the judgment (cf. Deut. iv. 30, xxx. 1 sqq.). שָׁבָה עָרָא, to return, to be converted to the Lord, denotes complete conversion; שָׁבָה אֵל is, strictly speaking, simply to turn towards God, to direct heart and mind towards Him. By *kāshaltā* sin is represented as a false step, which still leaves it possible to

return ; so that in a call to conversion it is very appropriately chosen. But if the conversion is to be of the right kind, it must begin with a prayer for the forgiveness of sin, and attest itself by the renunciation of earthly help and simple trust in the mercy of God. Israel is to draw near to God in this state of mind. "Take with you words," *i.e.* do not appear before the Lord empty (Ex. xxiii. 15, xxxiv. 20) ; but for this ye do not require outward sacrifices, but simply words, *sc.* those of confession of your guilt, as the Chaldee has correctly explained it. The correctness of this explanation is evident from the confession of sin which follows, with which they are to come before God. In לִפְנֵי יְהוָה, the position of *col* at the head of the sentence may be accounted for from the emphasis that rests upon it, and the separation of *avōn*, from the fact that *col* was beginning to acquire more of the force of an adjective, like our *all* (thus 2 Sam. i. 9 ; Job xxvii. 3 : cf. Ewald, § 289, *a* ; Ges. § 114, 3, Anm. 1). *Qach tōbh* means neither "accept goodness," *i.e.* let goodness be shown thee (Hitzig), nor "take it as good," *sc.* that we pray (Grotius, Ros.) ; but in the closest connection with what proceeds : Accept the only good thing that we are able to bring, *viz.* the sacrifices of our lips. Jerome has given the correct interpretation, *viz.* : "For unless Thou hadst borne away our evil things, we could not possibly have the good thing which we offer Thee ;" according to that which is written elsewhere (Ps. xxxvii. 27), "Turn from evil, and do good." וְנִשְׁלַמְהָ... שְׂפָתֵינוּ, literally, "we will repay (pay) as young oxen our lips," *i.e.* present the prayers of our lips as thank-offerings. The expression is to be explained from the fact that *skillēm*, to wipe off what is owing, to pay, is a technical term, applied to the sacrifice offered in fulfilment of a vow (Deut. xxiii. 22 ; Ps. xxii. 26, l. 14, etc.), and that *pârīm*, young oxen, were the best animals for thank-offerings (Ex. xxiv. 5). As such thank-offerings, *i.e.* in the place of the best animal sacrifices, they would offer their lips, *i.e.* their prayers, to God (cf. Ps. li. 17-19, lxix. 31, 32). In the Sept. rendering, ἀποδώσομεν καρπὸν χελέων, to which there is an allusion in Heb. xiii. 15, פָּרִים has been confounded with פִּי, as Jerome has already observed. But turning to God requires renunciation of the world, of its power, and of all idolatry. Rebellious Israel placed its reliance upon Assyria and Egypt (ch. v. 13, vii. 11, viii. 9). It will do this

no longer. The riding upon horses refers partly to the military force of Egypt (Isa. xxxi. 1), and partly to their own (ch. i. 7; Isa. ii. 7). For the expression, "neither will we say to the work of our hands," compare Isa. xlii. 17, xliv. 17. אֵשֶׁר בָּךְ, not "Thou with whom," but "for with Thee" (*āsher* as in Deut. iii. 24). The thought, "with Thee the orphan findeth compassion," as God promises in His word (Ex. xxii. 22; Deut. x. 18), serves not only as a reason for the resolution no longer to call the manufacture of their own hands God, but generally for the whole of the penitential prayer, which they are encouraged to offer by the compassionate nature of God. In response to such a penitential prayer, the Lord will heal all His people's wounds, and bestow upon them once more the fulness of the blessings of His grace. The prophet announces this in vers. 4-8 as the answer from the Lord.

Ver. 4. *"I will heal their apostasy, will love them freely: for my wrath has turned away from it. Ver. 5. I will be like dew for Israel: it shall blossom like the lily, and strike its roots like Lebanon. Ver. 6. Its shoots shall go forth, and its splendour shall become like the olive-tree, and its smell like Lebanon. Ver. 7. They that dwell in its shadow shall give life to corn again; and shall blossom like the vine: whose glory is like the wine of Lebanon. Ver. 8. Ephraim: What have I further with the idols? I hear, and look upon him: I, like a bursting cypress, in me is thy fruit found."* The Lord promises first of all to heal their apostasy, *i.e.* all the injuries which have been inflicted by their apostasy from Him, and to love them with perfect spontaneity (*n'ḏābhāh* an adverbial accusative, *prompta animi voluntate*), since His anger, which was kindled on account of its idolatry, had now turned away from it (*mimmennā*, *i.e.* from Israel). The reading *mimmennī* (from me), which the Babylonian Codices have after the Masora, appears to have originated in a misunderstanding of Jer. ii. 35. This love of the Lord will manifest itself in abundant blessing. Jehovah will be to Israel a refreshing, enlivening dew (cf. Isa. xxvi. 19), through which it will blossom splendidly, strike deep roots, and spread its shoots far and wide. "Like the lily:" the fragrant white lily, which is very common in Palestine, and grows without cultivation, and "which is unsurpassed in its fecundity, often producing fifty bulbs from a single root" (Pliny *h. n.* xxi. 5).

"Strike roots like Lebanon," *i.e.* not merely the deeply rooted forest of Lebanon, but the mountain itself, as one of the "foundations of the earth" (Mic. vi. 2). The deeper the roots, the more the branches spread and cover themselves with splendid green foliage, like the evergreen and fruitful olive-tree (Jer. xi. 16; Ps. lii. 10). The smell is like Lebanon, which is rendered fragrant by its cedars and spices (Song of Sol. iv. 11). The meaning of the several features in the picture has been well explained by Rosenmüller thus: "The *rooting* indicates stability; the *spreading of the branches*, propagation and the multitude of inhabitants; the *splendour of the olive*, beauty and glory, and that constant and lasting; the *fragrance*, hilarity and loveliness." In ver. 7 a somewhat different turn is given to the figure. The comparison of the growth and flourishing of Israel to the lily and to a tree, that strikes deep roots and spreads its green branches far and wide, passes imperceptibly into the idea that Israel is itself the tree beneath whose shade the members of the nation flourish with freshness and vigour. יִשְׂרָאֵל is to be connected adverbially with יָחַי. Those who sit beneath the shade of Israel, the tree that is bursting into leaf, will revive corn, *i.e.* cause it to return to life, or produce it for nourishment, satiety, and strengthening. Yea, they themselves will sprout like the vine, whose remembrance is, *i.e.* which has a renown, like the wine of Lebanon, which has been celebrated from time immemorial (cf. Plin. *h. n.* xiv. 7; Oedmann, *Verm. Sammlung aus der Naturkunde*, ii. p. 193; and Rosenmüller, *Bibl. Althk.* iv. 1, p. 217). The divine promise closes in ver. 9 with an appeal to Israel to renounce idols altogether, and hold fast by the Lord alone as the source of its life. *Ephraim* is a vocative, and is followed immediately by what the Lord has to say to Ephraim, so that we may supply *memento* in thought. מַה־לִּי עוֹד לַעֲ, what have I yet to do with idols? (for this phrase, compare Jer. ii. 18); that is to say, not "I have now to contend with thee on account of the idols (Schmieder), nor "do not place them by my side any more" (Ros.); but, "I will have nothing more to do with idols," which also implies that Ephraim is to have nothing more to do with them. To this there is appended a notice of what God has done and will do for Israel, to which greater prominence is given by the emphatic אֲנִי; I, I hearken (*ânîthî* a prophetic perfect), and


look upon him. **שׁוּר**, to look about for a person, to be anxious about him, or care for him, as in Job xxiv. 15. The suffix refers to Ephraim. In the last clause, God compares Himself to a cypress becoming green, not only to denote the shelter which He will afford to the people, but as the true tree of life, on which the nation finds its fruits—a fruit which nourishes and invigorates the spiritual life of the nation. The salvation which this promise sets before the people when they shall return to the Lord, is indeed depicted, according to the circumstances and peculiar views prevailing under the Old Testament, as earthly growth and prosperity; but its real nature is such, that it will receive a spiritual fulfilment in those Israelites alone who are brought to belief in Jesus Christ.

Ver. 9 (10) contains the epilogue to the whole book. *“Who is wise, that he may understand this? understanding, that he may discern it? For the ways of Jehovah are straight, and the righteous walk therein: but the rebellious stumble in them.”* The pronoun **אֵלֶּה** and the suffix to **יְרַעֲם** refer to everything that the prophet has laid before the people in his book for warning, for reproof, for correction, for chastening in righteousness. He concludes by summing up the whole substance of his teaching in the one general sentence, which points back to Deut. xxxii. 4: The ways of the Lord are straight. “The ways of Jehovah” (*darkhē Y’hōvāh*) are the ways taken by God in the guidance and government of men; not only the ways which He prescribes for them, but also His guidance of them. These ways lead some to life and others to death, according to the different attitudes which men assume towards God, as Moses announced to all the Israelites that they would (Deut. xxx. 19, 20), and as the Apostle Paul assured the church at Corinth that the gospel of Jesus also would (1 Cor. i. 18).



# JOEL.

## INTRODUCTION.

1. ERSON AND TIMES OF THE PROPHET JOEL.—  
*Joel* (יְהוֹאֵל, *i.e.* whose God is Jehovah, 'Ιωήλ) is distinguished from other men of the same name, which occurs very frequently (*e.g.* 1 Sam. viii. 2; 1 Chron. iv. 35, v. 4, viii. 12, vi. 21, vii. 3; 2 Chron. xxix. 12; Neh. xi. 9), by the epithet “son of *Pethuel*” (בֶּתוּאֵל, the open-heartedness or sincerity of God). Nothing is known of the circumstances connected with his life, since the traditional legends as to his springing from *Bethom* (Βηθώμ, *al.* Θεβυράμ in Ps. Epiph.), or *Bethomeron* in the tribe of Reuben (*Ps. Doroth.*), are quite unsupported. All that can be inferred with any certainty from his writings is, that he lived in Judah, and in all probability prophesied in Jerusalem. The date of his ministry is also a disputed point; though so much is certain, namely, that he did not live in the reign of Manasseh or Josiah, or even later, as some suppose, but was one of the earliest of the twelve minor prophets. For even Amos (i. 2) commences his prophecy with a passage from Joel (iii. 16), and closes it with the same promises, adopting in ch. ix. 13 the beautiful imagery of Joel, of the mountains dripping with new wine, and the hills overflowing (Joel iii. 18). And Isaiah, again, in his description of the coming judgment in ch. xiii., had Joel in his mind; and in ver. 6 he actually borrows a sentence from his prophecy (Joel i. 15), which is so peculiar that the agreement cannot be an accidental one. Consequently, Joel prophesied before Amos, *i.e.* before the twenty-seven years of the contemporaneous reigns of Uzziah and Jeroboam II. How long before, can only be inferred with any degree of probability from the historical circumstances to which



he refers in his prophecy. The only enemies that he mentions besides Egypt and Edom (ch. iii. 19), as those whom the Lord would punish for the hostility they had shown towards the people of God, are Tyre and Zidon, and the coasts of Philistia (ch. iii. 4); but not the Syrians, who planned an expedition against Jerusalem after the conquest of Gath, which cost Joash not only the treasures of the temple and palace, but his own life also (2 Kings xii. 18 sqq.; 2 Chron. xxiv. 23 sqq.), on account of which Amos predicted the destruction of the kingdom of Syria, and the transportation of the people to Assyria (Amos i. 3-5). But inasmuch as this expedition of the Syrians was not "directed against the Philistines, so that only a single detachment made a passing raid into Judah on their return," as Hengstenberg supposes, but was a direct attack upon the kingdom of Judah, to which the city of Gath, that Rehoboam had fortified, may still have belonged (see at 2 Kings xii. 18, 19), and inflicted a very severe defeat upon Judah, Joel would surely have mentioned the Syrians along with the other enemies of Judah, if he had prophesied after that event. And even if the absence of any reference to the hostility of the Syrians towards Judah is not strictly conclusive when taken by itself, it acquires great importance from the fact that the whole character of Joel's prophecy points to the times before Amos and Hosea. We neither meet with any allusion to the sins which Hosea and Amos condemn on the part of Judah, and which brought about the Assyrian judgment; nor is idolatry, as it prevailed under Joram, Ahaziah, and Athaliah, ever mentioned at all; but, on the contrary, the Jehovah-worship, which Jehoiada the high priest restored when Joash ascended the throne (2 Kings xi. 17 sqq.; 2 Chron. xxiii. 16 sqq.), is presupposed with all its well-regulated and priestly ceremonial. These circumstances speak very decidedly in favour of the conclusion that the first thirty years of the reign of Joash, during which the king had Jehoiada the high priest for his adviser, are to be regarded as the period of Joel's ministry. No well-founded objection can be brought against this on account of the position which his book occupies among the minor prophets, since there is no ground for the opinion that the writings of the twelve minor prophets are arranged with a strict regard to chronology.

**2. THE BOOK OF JOEL.**—The writings of Joel contain a connected prophetic proclamation, which is divided into two equal halves by ch. ii. 18 and 19*a*. In the first half the prophet depicts a terrible devastation of Judah by locusts and scorching heat; and describing this judgment as the harbinger, or rather as the dawn, of Jehovah's great day of judgment, summons the people of all ranks to a general day of penitence, fasting, and prayer, in the sanctuary upon Zion, that the Lord may have compassion upon His nation (ch. i. 2–ii. 17). In the second half there follows, as the divine answer to the call of the people to repentance, the promise that the Lord will destroy the army of locusts, and bestow a rich harvest blessing upon the land by sending early and latter rain (ch. ii. 19*b*–xxvii.), and then in the future pour out His Spirit upon all flesh (ch. ii. 28–32), and sit in judgment upon all nations, who have scattered His people and divided His land among them, and reward them according to their deeds; but that He will shelter His people from Zion, and glorify His land by rivers of abundant blessing (ch. iii.). These two halves are connected together by the statement that Jehovah manifests the jealousy of love for His land, and pity towards His people, and answers them (ch. ii. 18, 19*a*). So far the commentators are all agreed as to the contents of the book. But there are differences of opinion, more especially as to the true interpretation of the first half,—namely, whether the description of the terrible devastation by locusts is to be understood literally or allegorically.<sup>1</sup> The decision of this question depends upon the reply that is given to the prior question, whether ch. i. 2–

<sup>1</sup> The allegorical exposition is found even in the Chaldee, where the four names of the locusts are rendered literally in ch. i. 4, whereas in ch. ii. 25 we find hostile tribes and kingdoms instead; also in Ephraem Syrus, Cyril of Alex., Theodoret, and Jerome, although Theodoret regards the literal interpretation as also admissible, and in Abarb., Luther, and many other expositors. And lately it has been vigorously defended by Hengstenberg in his *Christology* (i. p. 302 translation), and by Hävernick (*Introduction*, ii. 2, p. 294 sqq.), who both of them agree with the fathers in regarding the four swarms of locusts as representing the imperial powers of Chaldaea, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. On the other hand, Rufinus, Jarchi, Ab. Ezra, Dav. Kimchi, support the literal view that Joel is describing a terrible devastation of the land by locusts; also Bochart, Pococke, J. H. Michaelis, and in the most recent times, Hofmann and Delitzsch.

ii. 17 contains a description of a present or a future judgment. If we observe, first of all, that the statement in ch. ii. 18 and 19a, by which the promise is introduced, is expressed in four successive imperfects with *Vav consec.* (the standing form for historical narratives), there can be no doubt whatever that this remark contains a historical announcement of what has taken place on the part of the Lord in consequence of the penitential cry of the people. And if this be established, it follows still further that the first half of our book cannot contain the prediction of a strictly future judgment, but must describe a calamity which has at any rate in part already begun. This is confirmed by the fact that the prophet from the very outset (ch. i. 2-4) describes the devastation of the land by locusts as a present calamity, on the ground of which he summons the people to repentance. As Joel begins with an appeal to the old men, to see whether such things have happened in their own days, or the days of their fathers, and to relate them to their children and children's children, and then describes the thing itself with simple perfects, 'יָתֵר הַזֶּזֶם אֶכֶּל וְגו', it is perfectly obvious that he is not speaking of something that is to take place in the future, but of a divine judgment that has been inflicted already.<sup>1</sup> It is true that the prophets frequently employ preterites in their description of future events, but there is no analogous example that can be found of such a use of them as we find here in ch. i. 2-4; and the remark made by Hengstenberg, to the effect that we find the preterites employed in exactly the same manner in ch. iii., is simply incorrect. But if Joel had an existing calamity before his eye, and depicts it in ch. i. 2 sqq., the question in dispute from time immemorial, whether the description is to be understood allegorically or literally, is settled in favour of the literal view. "An allegory must contain some significant marks of its being so. Where these are wanting, it is arbitrary to assume that it is an allegory at all." And we have no such marks here, as we shall show in our exposition in detail. "As it is a fact established by the

<sup>1</sup> "Some imagine," as Calvin well observes, "that a punishment is here threatened, which is to fall at some future time; but the context shows clearly enough that they are mistaken and mar the prophet's true meaning. He is rather reproving the hardness of the people, because they do not feel their plagues."

unanimous testimony of the most credible witnesses, that wherever swarms of locusts descend, all the vegetation in the fields immediately vanishes, just as if a curtain had been rolled up; that they spare neither the juicy bark of woody plants, nor the roots below the ground; that their cloud-like swarms darken the air, and render the sun and even men at a little distance off invisible; that their innumerable and closely compact army advances in military array in a straight course, most obstinately maintained; that it cannot be turned back or dispersed, either by natural obstacles or human force; that on its approach a loud roaring noise is heard like the rushing of a torrent, a waterfall, or a strong wind; that they no sooner settle to eat, than you hear on all sides the grating sound of their mandibles, and, as Volney expresses it, might fancy that you heard the foraging of an invisible army;—if we compare these and other natural observations with the statements of Joel, we shall find everywhere the most faithful picture, and nowhere any hyperbole requiring for its justification and explanation that the army of locusts should be paraphrased into an army of men; more especially as the devastation of a country by an army of locusts is far more terrible than that of an ordinary army; and there is no allusion, either expressed or hinted at, to a massacre among the people. And if we consider, still further, that the migratory locusts (*Acridium migratorium*, in Oken, *Allg. Naturgesch.* v. 3, p. 1514 sqq.) find their grave sometimes in dry and barren steppes, and sometimes in lakes and seas, it is impossible to comprehend how the promise in ch. ii. 20—one part of the army now devastating Judah shall be hurled into the southern desert, the van into the Dead Sea, and the rear into the Mediterranean—can harmonize with the allegorical view” (Delitzsch).<sup>1</sup> The only thing that appears to favour the idea that the locusts are used figuratively to represent hostile armies, is the circumstance that Joel discerns in the devastation of the locusts as depicted by him, the drawing near or coming of the day of the Lord (ch. i. 15, ii. 1), connected with the fact that Isaiah speaks of the judgment upon Baal, which was accomplished by

<sup>1</sup> Proofs of this have been collected in great numbers by Sam. Bochart (*Hieroz.*), and both Oedmann (*Vermischte Sammlungen*, ii. 76 sqq. and vi. 74 sqq.) and Credner (appendix to his *Commentary on Joel*) have contributed abundant gleanings gathered from the reports of travellers.

a hostile army, in the words of Joel (ch. i. 15; see Isa. xiii. 6). But on closer examination, this appearance does not rise into reality. It is true that by the "day of Jehovah" we cannot understand a different judgment from the devastation of the locusts, since such a supposition would be irreconcilable with ch. ii. 1 sqq. But the expression, "for the day of Jehovah is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty does it come," shows that the prophet did not so completely identify the day of the Lord with the plague of locusts, as that it was exhausted by it, but that he merely saw in this the approach of the great day of judgment, *i.e.* merely one element of the judgment, which falls in the course of ages upon the ungodly, and will be completed in the last judgment. One factor in the universal judgment is the judgment pronounced upon Babylon, and carried out by the Medes; so that it by no means follows from the occurrence of the words of Joel in the prophecy of Isaiah, that the latter put an allegorical interpretation upon Joel's description of the devastation by the locusts.

But even if there are no conclusive indications or hints, that can be adduced in support of the allegorical interpretation, it cannot be denied, on the other hand, that the description, as a whole, contains something more than a poetical painting of one particular instance of the devastation of Judah by a more terrible swarm of locusts than had ever been known before; that is to say, that it bears an ideal character surpassing the reality,—a fact which is overlooked by such commentators as can find nothing more in the account than the description of a very remarkable plague. The introduction, "Hear this, ye old men; and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land: hath this been in your days, or in the days of your fathers? Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children the following generation" (ch. i. 2, 3); and the lamentation in ver. 9, that the meat-offering and drink-offering have been destroyed from the house of Jehovah; and still more, the picture of the day of the Lord as a day of darkness and of gloominess like the morning red spread over the mountains; a great people and a strong, such as has not been from all eternity, and after which there will be none like it for ever and ever (ch. ii. 2),—unquestionably show that Joel not only regarded the plague of locusts that came upon Judah in the light of divine revelation,

and as a sign, but described it as the breaking of the Lord's great day of judgment, or that in the advance of the locusts he saw the army of God, at whose head Jehovah marched as captain, and caused His voice, the terrible voice of the Judge of the universe, to be heard in the thunder (ch. ii. 11), and that he predicted this coming of the Lord, before which the earth trembles, the heavens shake, and sun, moon, and stars lose their brightness (ch. ii. 10), as His coming to judge the world. This proclamation, however, was no production of mere poetical exaggeration, but had its source in the inspiration of the Spirit of God, which enlightened the prophet; so that in the terrible devastation that had fallen upon Judah he discerned one feature of the day of judgment of the Lord, and on the ground of the judgment of God that had been thus experienced, proclaimed that the coming of the Lord to judgment upon the whole world was near at hand. The medium through which this was conveyed to his mind was meditation upon the history of the olden time, more especially upon the judgments through which Jehovah had effected the redemption of His people out of Egypt, in connection with the punishment with which Moses threatened the transgressors of the law (Deut. xxviii. 38, 39, 42),—namely, that locusts should devour their seed, their plants, their fields, and their fruits. Hengstenberg has correctly observed, that the words of Joel in ch. ii. 10, "There have not been ever the like," are borrowed from Ex. x. 14; but it is not in these words alone that the prophet points to the Egyptian plague of locusts. In the very introduction to his prophecy (ch. i. 2, 3), viz. the question whether such a thing has occurred, and the charge, Tell it to your children, etc., there is an unmistakeable allusion to Ex. x. 2, where the Lord charges Moses to tell Pharaoh that He will do signs, in order that Pharaoh may relate it to his son and his son's son, and then announces the plague of locusts in these words: "that thy fathers and thy fathers' fathers have not seen such things since their existence upon the earth" (Ex. x. 6). As the basis of this judgment of God which fell upon Egypt in the olden time, and by virtue of a higher illumination, Joel discerned in the similar judgment that had burst upon Judah in his own time, a type of the coming of Jehovah's great day of judgment, and made it the substratum of his prophecy of the judgment of

the wrath of the Lord which would come upon Judah, to terrify the sinners out of their self-security, and impel them by earnest repentance, fasting, and prayer, to implore the divine mercy for deliverance from utter destruction. This description of the coming day of Jehovah, *i.e.* of the judgment of the world, for which the judgment inflicted upon Judah of the devastation by locusts prepared the way, after the foretype of these occurrences of both the olden and present time, is no allegory, however, in which the heathen nations, by whom the judgments upon the covenant nation that had gone further and further from its God would be executed in the time to come, are represented as swarms of locusts coming one after another and devastating the land of Judah; but it has just the same reality as the plague of locusts through which God once sought to humble the pride of the Egyptian Pharaoh. We are no more at liberty to turn the locusts in the prophecy before us into hostile armies, than to pronounce the locusts by which Egypt was devastated, allegorical figures representing enemies or troops of hostile cavalry. Such a metamorphosis as this is warranted neither by the vision in Amos vii. 1-3, where Amos is said to have seen the divine judgment under the figure of a swarm of locusts; nor by that described in Rev. ix. 3 sqq., where locusts which come out of the bottomless pit are commanded neither to hurt the grass nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only to torment men with their scorpion-stings: for even in these visions the locusts are not figurative, representing hostile nations; but on the basis of the Egyptian plague of locusts and of Joel's prophecy, they stand in Amos as a figurative representation of the devastation of the land, and in the Apocalypse as the symbol of a supernatural plague inflicted upon the ungodly. Lastly, another decisive objection to the allegorical interpretation is to be found in the circumstance, that neither in the first nor in the second half of his book does Joel predict the particular judgments which God will inflict in the course of time, partly upon His degenerate people, and partly upon the hostile powers of the world, but that he simply announces the judgment of God upon Judah and the nations of the world in its totality, as the great and terrible day of the Lord, without unfolding more minutely or even suggesting the particular facts in which it will be historically realized. In this respect, the ideality of

his prophecy is maintained throughout; and the only speciality given to it is, that in the first half the judgment upon the covenant people is proclaimed, and in the second the judgment upon the heathen nations: the former as the groundwork of a call to repentance; the latter as the final separation between the church of the Lord and its opponents. And this separation between the covenant nation and the powers of the world is founded on fact. The judgment only falls upon the covenant nation when it is unfaithful to its divine calling, when it falls away from its God, and that not to destroy and annihilate it, but to lead it back by means of chastisement to the Lord its God. If it hearken to the voice of its God, who speaks to it in judgments, the Lord repents of the evil, and turns the calamity into salvation and blessing. It was Joel's mission to proclaim this truth in Judah, and turn the sinful nation to its God. To this end he proclaimed to the people, that the Lord was coming to judgment in the devastation that the locusts had spread over the land, and by depicting the great and terrible day of the Lord, called upon them to turn to their God with all their heart. This call to repentance was not without effect. The Lord was jealous for His land, and spared His people (ch. ii. 18), and sent His prophets to proclaim the removal of the judgment and the bestowal of a bountiful earthly and spiritual blessing: viz., for the time immediately ensuing the destruction of the army of locusts, the sending of the teacher for righteousness, and a plentiful fall of rain for the fruitful supply of the fruits of the ground (ch. ii. 19, 27); and in the more remote future, the pouring out of His Spirit upon the whole congregation, and on the day of the judgment upon all nations the deliverance and preservation of His faithful worshippers; and finally, after the judgment, the transformation and eternal glory of Zion (ch. ii. 28—iii. 21). Here, again, the ideality of the prophetic announcement is maintained throughout, although a distinction is made between the inferior blessing in the immediate future, and the higher benediction of the church of God at a more distant period. The outpouring of the Spirit of God upon all flesh is followed, without any intervening link, by the announcement of the coming of the terrible day of the Lord, as a day of judgment upon all nations, including those who have shown themselves hostile



to Judah, either in Joel's own time or a little while before. The nations are gathered together in the valley of Jehoshaphat, and there judged by Jehovah through His mighty heroes; but the sons of Israel are delivered and sheltered by their God. Here, again, all the separate judgments, which fall upon the nations of the world that are hostile to God, during the many centuries of the gradual development of the kingdom of God upon earth, are summed up in one grand judicial act on the day of Jehovah, through which the separation is completely effected between the church of the Lord and its foes, the ungodly power of the world annihilated, and the kingdom of God perfected; but without the slightest hint, that both the judgment upon the nations and the glorification of the kingdom of God will be fulfilled through a succession of separate judgments.

The book of Joel, therefore, contains two prophetic addresses, which are not only connected together as one work by the historical remark in ch. ii. 18, 19a, but which stand in the closest relation to each other, so far as their contents are concerned, though the one was not delivered to the people directly after the other, but the first during the devastation by the locusts, to lead the people to observe the judgment of God and to assemble together in the temple for a service of penitence and prayer; and the second not till after the priests had appointed a day of fasting, penitence, and prayer, in the house of the Lord, in consequence of His solemn call to repentance, and in the name of the people had prayed to the Lord to pity and spare His inheritance. The committal of these addresses to writing did not take place, at any rate, till after the destruction of the army of the locusts, when the land began to recover from the devastation that it had suffered. But whether Joel committed these addresses to writing just as he delivered them to the congregation, and merely linked them together into one single work by introducing the historical remark that unites them, or whether he merely inserted in his written work the essential contents of several addresses delivered after this divine judgment, and worked them up into one connected prophecy, it is impossible to decide with certainty. But there is no doubt whatever as to the composition of the written work by the prophet himself.—For the different commentaries upon the book of Joel, see my *Introduction to the Old Testament*.

## EXPOSITION.

I. THE JUDGMENT OF GOD, AND THE PROPHET'S CALL TO  
REPENTANCE.—CHAP. I. 2-II. 17.

An unparalleled devastation of the land of Judah by several successive swarms of locusts, which destroyed all the seedlings, all field and garden fruits, all plants and trees, and which was accompanied by scorching heat, induced the prophet to utter a loud lamentation at this unparalleled judgment of God, and an earnest call to all classes of the nation to offer prayer to the Lord in the temple, together with fasting, mourning, and weeping, that He might avert the judgment. In the first chapter, the lamentation has reference chiefly to the ruin of the land (ch. i. 2-20); in the second, the judgment is depicted as a foretype and harbinger of the approaching day of the Lord, which the congregation is to anticipate by a day of public fasting, repentance, and prayer (ch. ii. 1-17); so that ch. i. describes rather the magnitude of the judgment, and ch. ii. 1-17 its significance in relation to the covenant nation.

LAMENTATION OVER THE DEVASTATION OF JUDAH BY LOCUSTS  
AND DROUGHT.—CHAP. I.

After an appeal to lay to heart the devastation by swarms of locusts, which has fallen upon the land (vers. 2-4), the prophet summons the following to utter lamentation over this calamity: first the drunkards, who are to awake (vers. 5-7); then the congregation generally, which is to mourn with penitence (vers. 8-12); and then the priests, who are to appoint a service of repentance (vers. 13-18). For each of these appeals he gives, as a reason, a further description of the horrible calamity, corresponding to the particular appeal; and finally, he sums up his lamentation in a prayer for the deliverance of the land from destruction (vers. 19, 20).

Ver. 1 contains the heading to the book, and has already been noticed in the introduction. Ver. 2. "*Hear this, ye old men; and attend, all ye inhabitants of the land! Has such a thing*

indeed happened in your days, or in the days of your fathers? Ver. 3. *Ye shall tell your sons of it, and your sons their sons, and their sons the next generation.* Ver. 4. *The leavings of the gnawer the multiplier ate, and the leavings of the multiplier the licker ate, and the leavings of the licker the devourer ate.*" Not only for the purpose of calling the attention of the hearers to his address, but still more to set forth the event of which he is about to speak as something unheard of—a thing that has never happened before, and therefore is a judgment inflicted by God—the prophet commences with the question addressed to the old men, whose memory went the furthest back, and to all the inhabitants of Judah, whether they had ever experienced anything of the kind, or heard of such a thing from their fathers; and with the command to relate it to their children, and grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.<sup>1</sup> "The inhabitants of the land" are the inhabitants of Judah, as it was only with this kingdom that Joel was occupied (cf. ver. 14 and ch. ii. 1). *אִתּוֹ* is the occurrence related in ver. 4, which is represented by the question "Has this been in your days?" as a fact just experienced. *Yether haggâzâm*, the leavings of the gnawer, i.e. whatever the gnawer leaves unconsumed of either vegetables or plants. The four names given to the locusts, viz. *gâzâm*, 'arbeh, *yeleq*, and *châsîl*, are not the names applied in natural history to four distinct species, or four different generations of locusts; nor does Joel describe the swarms of two successive years, so that "*gâzâm* is the migratory locust, which visits Palestine chiefly in the autumn, 'arbeh the young brood, *yeleq* the young locust in the last stage of its transformation, or before changing its skin for the fourth time, and *châsîl* the perfect locust after this last change, so that as the brood sprang from the *gâzâm*, *châsîl* would be equivalent to *gâzâm*" (Credner). This explanation is

<sup>1</sup> "As he is inquiring concerning the past according to the command of Moses in Deut. xxxii. 7, he asks the old men, who have been taught by long experience, and are accustomed, whenever they see anything unusual, to notice that this is not according to the ordinary course of nature, which they have observed for so many years. And since this existing calamity, caused by the insects named, has lasted longer and pressed more heavily than usual, he admonishes them to carry their memory back to the former days, and see whether anything of the kind ever happened naturally before; and if no example can be found, the prophet's advice is, that they should recognise this as the hand of God from heaven."—TARNOV.

not only at variance with ch. ii. 25, where *gázâm* stands last, after *chásîl*, but is founded generally merely upon a false interpretation of Nah. iii. 15, 16 (see the passage) and Jer. li. 27, where the adjective *sâmâr* (*horridus*, horrible), appended to *yeleg*, from *samar*, to shudder, by no means refers to the rough, horny, wing-sheath of the young locusts, and cannot be sustained from the usage of the language. It is impossible to point out any difference in usage between *gázâm* and *chásîl*, or between these two words and *'arbeh*. The word *gázâm*, from *gázam*, to cut off (in Arabic, Ethiopic, and the Rabb.), occurs only in this passage, in ch. ii. 25, and in Amos iv. 9, where it is applied to a swarm of flying locusts, which leave the vine, fig-tree, and olive, perfectly bare, as it is well known that all locusts do, when, as in Amos, the vegetables and field fruits have been already destroyed. *'Arbeh*, from *râbhâh*, to be many, is the common name of the locust, and indeed in all probability of the migratory locust, because this always appears in innumerable swarms. *Chásîl*, from *châsal*, to eat off, designates the locust (*há'arbeh*), according to Deut. xxviii. 38, by its habit of eating off the field crops and tree fruits, and is therefore used in 1 Kings viii. 37, 2 Chron. vi. 28, Ps. lxxviii. 46, as synonymous with *há'arbeh*, and in Isa. xxxiii. 4 in its stead. *Yeleg*, from *yâlaq* = *lâqaq*, to lick, to lick off, occurs in Ps. cv. 34 as equivalent to *'arbeh*, and in Nahum as synonymous with it; and indeed it there refers expressly to the Egyptian plague of locusts, so that young locusts without wings cannot possibly be thought of. *Haggázâm* the gnawer, *hayyeleg* the lickster, *hechásîl* the devourer, are therefore simply poetical epithets applied to the *'arbeh*, which never occur in simple plain prose, but are confined to the loftier (rhetorical and poetical) style. Moreover, the assumption that Joel is speaking of swarms of locusts of two successive years, is neither required by ch. ii. 25 (see the comm. on this verse), nor reconcilable with the contents of the verse itself. If the *'arbeh* eats what the *gázâm* has left, and the *yeleg* what is left by the *'arbeh*, we cannot possibly think of the field and garden fruits of two successive years, because the fruits of the second year are not the leavings of the previous year, but have grown afresh in the year itself.<sup>1</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Bochart (*Hieroz.* iii. p. 290, ed. Ros.) has already expressed the same opinion. "If," he says, "the different species had been assigned to so

thought is rather this: one swarm of locusts after another has invaded the land, and completely devoured its fruit. The use of several different words, and the division of the locusts into four successive swarms, of which each devours what has been left by its precursor, belong to the rhetorical drapery and individualizing of the thought. The only thing that has any real significance is the number four, as the four kinds of punishment in Jer. xv. 3, and the four destructive judgments in Ezek. xiv. 21, clearly show. The number four, "the stamp of œcumenicity" (Kliefoth), indicates here the spread of the judgment over the whole of Judah in all directions.

Vers. 5-7. In order that Judah may discern in this unparalleled calamity a judgment of God, and the warning voice of God calling to repentance, the prophet first of all summons the wine-bibbers to sober themselves, and observe the visitation of God. Ver. 5. *"Awake, ye drunken ones, and weep! and howl, all ye drinkers of wine! at the new wine; for it is cut off from your mouth."* Ver. 6. *"For a people has come up over my land, a strong one, and innumerable: its teeth are lion's teeth, and it has the bite of a lioness."* Ver. 7. *"It has made my vine a wilderness, and my fig-trees into sticks. Peeling, it has peeled it off, and cast it away: its shoots have grown white."* יָפְפוּ, to awake out of the reeling of intoxication, as in Prov. xxiii. 35. They are to howl for the new wine, the fresh sweet juice of the grape, because with the destruction of the vines it is taken away and destroyed from their mouth. Vers. 6 and 7 announce through whom. In the expression גּוֹי' אֱלֹאִה (a people has come up) the locusts are represented as a warlike people,

many different years, the 'arbeh would not be said to have eaten the leavings of the gâzâm, or the yeleq the leavings of the 'arbeh, or the châsîl the leavings of the yeleq; for the productions of this year are not the leavings of last, nor can what will spring up in future be looked upon as the leavings of this. Therefore, whether this plague of locusts was confined to one year, or was repeated for several years, which seems to be the true inference from Joel ii. 25, I do not think that the different species of locusts are to be assigned to different years respectively, but that they all entered Judæa in the same year; so that when one swarm departed from a field, another followed, to eat up the leavings of the previous swarm, if there were any; and that this was repeated as many times as was necessary to consume the whole, so that nothing at all should be left to feed either man or beast."

because they devastate the land like a hostile army. *Gōi* furnishes no support to the allegorical view. In Prov. xxx. 25, 26, not only are the ants described as a people (*ām*), but the locusts also; although it is said of them that they have no king. And *ām* is synonymous with *gōi*, which has indeed very frequently the idea of that which is hostile, and even here is used in this sense; though it by no means signifies a heathen nation, but occurs in Zeph. ii. 9 by the side of *ām*, as an epithet applied to the people of Jehovah (*i.e.* Israel: see also Gen. xii. 2). The weapons of this army consist in its teeth, its "bite," which grinds in pieces as effectually as the teeth of the lion or the bite of the lioness (מִתְלַנֵּחַ; see at Job xxix. 17). The suffix attached to מִתְלַנֵּחַ does not refer to Jehovah, but to the prophet, who speaks in the name of the people, so that it is the land of the people of God. And this also applies to the suffixes in מִתְלַנֵּחַ and מִתְלַנֵּחַ in ver. 7. In the description of the devastation caused by the army of locusts, the vine and fig-tree are mentioned as the noblest productions of the land, which the Lord has given to His people for their inheritance (see at Hos. ii. 14). מַשְׁחָפִיחַ, *eis klasthōn*, literally, for crushing. The suffix in *chāsāphāh* refers, no doubt, simply to the vine as the principal object, the fig-tree being mentioned casually in connection with it. *Chāsāph*, to strip, might be understood as referring simply to the leaves of the vine (cf. Ps. xxix. 9); but what follows shows that the gnawing or eating away of the bark is also included. *Hishlūkh*, to throw away not merely what is uneatable, "that which is not green and contains no sap" (Hitzig), but the vine itself, which the locusts have broken when eating off its leaves and bark. The branches of the vine have become white through the eating off of the bark (*sārīgim*, Gen. xl. 10).<sup>1</sup>

Vers. 8-12. The whole nation is to mourn over this devastation. Ver. 8. "*Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth.*" Ver. 9. "*The meat-offering and the drink-offering are destroyed from the house of Jehovah. The*

<sup>1</sup> H. Ludolf, in his *Histor. Æthiop.* i. c. 13, § 16, speaking of the locusts, says: "Neither herbs, nor shrubs, nor trees remain unhurt. Whatever is either grassy or covered with leaves, is injured, as if it had been burnt with fire. Even the bark of trees is nibbled with their teeth, so that the injury is not confined to one year alone."

priests, the servants of Jehovah mourn. Ver. 10. The field is laid waste, the ground mourns: for the corn is laid waste: the new wine is spoiled, the oil decays. Ver. 11. Turn pale, ye husbandmen; howl, ye vinedressers, over wheat and barley: for the harvest of the field is perished. Ver. 12. The vine is spoiled, and the fig-tree faded; the pomegranate, also the palm and the apple tree: all the trees of the field are withered away; yea, joy has expired from the children of men." In ver. 8 Judah is addressed as the congregation of Jehovah. אֲלֵי is the imperative of the

verb אָלָה, equivalent to the Syriac ܐܠܗ, to lament. The verb

only occurs here. The lamentation of the virgin for the בְּעַל נְעֻרֶיהָ, i.e. the beloved of her youth, her bridegroom, whom she has lost by death (Isa. liv. 6), is the deepest and bitterest lamentation. With reference to תְּנִירַת־שֶׁקַּע, see Delitzsch on Isa. iii. 24. The occasion of this deep lamentation, according to ver. 9, is the destruction of the meat-offering and drink-offering from the house of the Lord, over which the servants of Jehovah mourn. The meat and drink offerings must of necessity cease, because the corn, the new wine, and the oil are destroyed through the devastation of the field and soil. *Hokhrath minchâh* does not affirm that the offering of the daily morning and evening sacrifice (Ex. xxix. 38-42)—for it is to this that מִנְחָה וְנֶסֶךְ chiefly, if not exclusively, refers—has already ceased; but simply that any further offering is rendered impossible by the failure of meal, wine, and oil. Now Israel could not suffer any greater calamity than the suspension of the daily sacrifice; for this was a practical suspension of the covenant relation—a sign that God had rejected His people. Therefore, even in the last siege of Jerusalem by the Romans, the sacrificial worship was not suspended till it had been brought to the last extremity; and even then it was for the want of sacrificers, and not of the material of sacrifice (Josephus, *de bell. Jud.* vi. 2, 1). The reason for this anxiety was the devastation of the field and land (ver. 10); and this is still further explained by a reference to the devastation and destruction of the fruits of the ground, viz. the corn, i.e. the corn growing in the field, so that the next harvest would be lost, and the new wine and oil, i.e. the vines and olive-trees, so that they could bear no grapes for new wine, and no olives for oil. The verbs in ver. 11a are not

perfects, but imperatives, as in the fifth verse. הָבִישׁ has the same meaning as *bōsh*, as in Jer. ii. 26, vi. 15, etc., to stand ashamed, to turn pale with shame at the disappointment of their hope, and is probably written defectively, without י, to distinguish it from הוֹבִישׁ, the *hiphil* of הִבֵּשׁ, to be parched or dried up (vers. 10 and 12). The hope of the husbandmen was disappointed through the destruction of the wheat and barley, the most important field crops. The vine-growers had to mourn over the destruction of the vine and the choice fruit-trees (ver. 12), such as the fig and pomegranate, and even the date-palm (*gam-tûmâr*), which has neither a fresh green rind nor tender juicy leaves, and therefore is not easily injured by the locusts so as to cause it to dry up; and *tappûdch*, the apple-tree, and all the trees of the field, *i.e.* all the rest of the trees, wither. "All trees, whether fruit-bearing or not, are consumed by the devastating locusts" (Jerome). In the concluding clause of ver. 12, the last and principal ground assigned for the lamentation is, that joy is taken away and withered from the children of men (*hōbhîsh min*, *constr. prægn.*). כִּי introduces a reason here as elsewhere, though not for the clause immediately preceding, but for the הִבֵּשׁ and הַיֵּלֵל in ver. 11, the leading thought in both verses; and we may therefore express it by an emphatic *yea*.

Vers. 13–20. The affliction is not removed by mourning and lamentation, but only through repentance and supplication to the Lord, who can turn away all evil. The prophet therefore proceeds to call upon the priests to offer to the Lord penitential supplication day and night in the temple, and to call the elders and all the people to observe a day of fasting, penitence, and prayer; and then offers supplication himself to the Lord to have compassion upon them (ver. 19). From the motive assigned for this appeal, we may also see that a terrible drought had been associated with the devastation by the locusts, from which both man and beast had endured the most bitter suffering, and that Joel regarded this terrible calamity as a sign of the coming of the day of the Lord. Ver. 13. *"Gird yourselves, and lament, ye priests; howl, ye servants of the altar; come, pass the night in sackcloth, ye servants of my God: for the meat-offering and drink-offering are withdrawn from the house of your God."* Ver. 14. *Sanctify a fast, call out an assembly, assemble the*



elders, all ye inhabitants of the land, at the house of Jehovah your God, and cry to Jehovah." From what follows we must supply *bassaqqim* (with sackcloth) to *chigrū* (gird yourselves). Gird yourselves with mourning apparel, *i.e.* put it on (see ver. 8). In this they are to pass the night, to offer supplication day and night, or incessantly, standing between the altar and the porch (ch. ii. 17). "Servants of my God," *i.e.* of the God whose prophet I am, and from whom I can promise you a hearing. The reason assigned for this appeal is the same as for the lamentation in ver. 9. But it is not the priests only who are to pray incessantly to the Lord; the elders and all the people are to do the same. קִדֵּשׁ צוֹם, to sanctify a fast, *i.e.* to appoint a holy fast, a divine service of prayer connected with fasting. To this end the priests are to call an *'atsārāh*, *i.e.* a meeting of the congregation for religious worship. *'Atsārāh*, or *'ätsereth*, *πατήρυς*, is synonymous with מִקְרָא קִדְשׁ in Lev. xxiii. 36 (see the exposition of that passage). In what follows, בְּלִי יִשְׁכְּחֵי ה' is attached ἀσυνδέτως to וְקָנִים; and the latter is not a vocative, but an accusative of the object. On the other hand, יְהוָה בֵּית יְהוָה is an *accus. loci*, and dependent upon וְקָנִים, to cry, used of loud and importunate prayer. It is only by this that destruction can still be averted.

Ver. 15. "Alas for the day! for the day of Jehovah is near, and it comes like violence from the Almighty." This verse does not contain words which the priests are to speak, so that we should have to supply לְאִמֵּר, like the Syriac and others, but words of the prophet himself, with which he justifies the appeal in vers. 13 and 14. לַיּוֹם is the time of the judgment, which has fallen upon the land and people through the devastation by the locusts. This "day" is the beginning of the approaching day of Jehovah, which will come like a devastation from the Almighty. *Yōm Y'hōvāh* is the great day of judgment upon all ungodly powers, when God, as the almighty ruler of the world, brings down and destroys everything that has exalted itself against Him; thus making the history of the world, through His rule over all creatures in heaven and earth, into a continuous judgment, which will conclude at the end of this course of the world with a great and universal act of judgment, through which everything that has been brought to eternity by the stream of time unjudged and

unadjusted, will be judged and adjusted once for all, to bring to an end the whole development of the world in accordance with its divine appointment, and perfect the kingdom of God by the annihilation of all its foes. (Compare the magnificent description of this day of the Lord in Isa. ii. 12-21.) And accordingly this particular judgment—through which Jehovah on the one hand chastises His people for their sins, and on the other hand destroys the enemies of His kingdom—forms one element of the day of Jehovah; and each of these separate judgments is a coming of that day, and a sign of His drawing near. This day Joel saw in the judgment that came upon Judah in his time, *k'shōd misshaddai*, lit. like a devastation from the Almighty,—a play upon the words (since *shōd* and *shaddai* both come from *shādad*), which Rückert renders, though somewhat too freely, by *wie ein Graussen vom grossen Gott*. וְ is the so-called *veritatis*, expressing a comparison between the individual and its genus or its idea. On the relation between this verse and Isa. xiii. 6, see the Introduction.

Ver. 16. “*Is not the food destroyed before our eyes, joy and exulting from the house of our God?*” Ver. 17. *The grains have mouldered under their clods, the storehouses are desolate, the barns have fallen down; because the corn is destroyed.* Ver. 18. *How the cattle groan! the herds of oxen are bewildered, for no pasture was left for them; even the flocks of sheep suffer.*” As a proof that the day of the Lord is coming like a devastation from the Almighty, the prophet points in ver. 16 to the fact that the food is taken away before their eyes, and therewith all joy and exulting from the house of God. “The food of the sinners perishes before their eyes, since the crops they looked for are snatched away from their hands, and the locust anticipates the reaper” (Jerome). אִמְלָה, food as the means of sustenance; according to ver. 10, corn, new wine, and oil. The joy is thereby taken from the house of Jehovah, inasmuch as, when the crops are destroyed, neither first-fruits nor thank-offerings can be brought to the sanctuary to be eaten there at joyful meals (Deut. xii. 6, 7, xvi. 10, 11). And the calamity became all the more lamentable, from the fact that, in consequence of a terrible drought, the seed perished in the earth, and consequently the prospect of a crop the following year entirely disappeared. The prophet refers to this in ver. 17, which has

been rendered in extremely different ways by the LXX, Chald., and Vulg., on account of the ἀπ. λεγ. עָבָשׁוּ, פָּרְדוּת, and מְרַפּוֹת (compare Pococke, *ad h. l.*). עָבָשׁ signifies to moulder away, or, as the injury was caused by dryness and heat, to dry up; it is used here of grains of corn which lose their germinating power, from the Arabic عَبَسَ, to become dry or withered, and the Chaldee עָבַשׁ, to get mouldy. *P'rudōth*, in Syriac, grains of corn sowed broadcast, probably from *pārad*, to scatter about. *Megrāphōth*, according to Ab. Esr., clods of earth (compare جَرَفَ, *gleba terræ*), from *gāraph*, to wash away (Judg. v. 21) a detached piece of earth. If the seed-corn loses its germinating power beneath the clod, no corn-harvest can be looked for. The storehouses (*ōtsārōth*; cf. 2 Chron. xxxii. 27) moulder away, and the barns (*mamm'gūrāh* with *dag. dirim.* = *m'gūrāh* in Hag. ii. 19) fall, tumble to pieces, because being useless they are not kept in proper condition. The drought also deprives the cattle of their pasture, so that the herds of oxen and flocks of sheep groan and suffer with the rest from the calamity. נִפְּלָה, *nīphal*, to be bewildered with fear. 'Ashēm, to expiate, to suffer the consequences of men's sin.

The fact, that even irrational creatures suffer along with men, impels the prophet to pray for help to the Lord, who helps both man and beast (Ps. xxxvi. 7). Ver. 19. "To Thee, O Jehovah, do I cry: for fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and flame has consumed all the trees of the field. Ver. 20. Even the beasts of the field cry unto Thee; for the water-brooks are dried up, and fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness." Fire and flame are the terms used by the prophet to denote the burning heat of the drought, which consumes the meadows, and even scorches up the trees. This is very obvious from the drying up of the water-brooks (in ver. 20). For ver. 20a, compare Jer. xiv. 5, 6. In ver. 20b the address is rhetorically rounded off by the repetition of וְאִשָּׁה, from ver. 19.

SUMMONS TO PENITENTIAL PRAYER FOR THE REMOVAL OF  
THE JUDGMENT.—CHAP. II. 1-17.

This section does not contain a fresh or second address of the prophet, but simply forms the second part of his sermon of repentance, in which he repeats with still greater emphasis the command already hinted at in ch. i. 14, 15, that there should be a meeting of the congregation for humiliation and prayer, and assigns the reason in a comprehensive picture of the approach of Jehovah's great and terrible judgment-day (vers. 1-11), coupled with the cheering assurance that the Lord will still take compassion upon His people, according to His great grace, if they will return to Him with all their heart (vers. 12-14); and then closes with another summons to the whole congregation to assemble for this purpose in the house of the Lord, and with instructions how the priests are to pray to the Lord (vers. 15-17).

Vers. 1-11. By blowing the far-sounding horn, the priests are to make known to the people the coming of the judgment, and to gather them together in the temple to pray. Ver. 1. *"Blow ye the trumpet upon Zion, and cause it to sound upon my holy mountain! All the inhabitants of the land shall tremble; for the day of Jehovah cometh, for it is near."* That this summons is addressed to the priests, is evident from ver. 15, compared with ver. 14. On *tiq'û shôphâr* and *hârî'û*, see at Hos. v. 8. "Upon Zion," *i.e.* from the top of the temple mountain. Zion is called the holy mountain, as in Ps. ii. 6, because the Lord was there enthroned in His sanctuary, on the summit of Moriah, which He claimed as His own. *Râgaz*, to tremble, *i.e.* to start up from their careless state (Hitzig). On the expression, "for the day of Jehovah cometh," see ch. i. 15. By the position of *נִצַּח* at the head of the sentence, and that in the perfect *נָצַח* instead of the imperfect, as in ch. i. 15, the coming of the day of Jehovah is represented as indisputably certain. The addition of *kî qârôbh* (for it is near) cannot be accounted for, however, from the fact that in the spiritual intuition of the prophet this day had already come, whereas in reality it was only drawing near (Hengstenberg); for such a separation as this between one element of prophesying and another is incon-

ceivable. The explanation is simply, that the day of the Lord runs throughout the history of the kingdom of God, so that it occurs in each particular judgment; not, however, as fully manifested, but simply as being near or approaching, so far as its complete fulfilment is concerned. Joel now proclaims the coming of that day in its full completion, on the basis of the judgment already experienced, as the approach of a terrible army of locusts that darkens the land, at the head of which Jehovah is riding in all the majesty of the Judge of the world. The description is divided into three strophes thus: he first of all depicts the sight of this army of God, as seen afar off, and its terrible appearance in general (vers. 2b and 3); then the appearance and advance of this mighty army (vers. 4-6); and lastly, its irresistible power (vers. 7-11); and closes the first strophe with a figurative description of the devastation caused by this terrible army, whilst in the second and third he gives prominence to the terror which they cause among all nations, and over all the earth. Ver. 2. *"A day of darkness and obscurity, a day of clouds and cloudy night: like morning dawn spread over the mountains, a people great and strong: there has not been the like from all eternity, nor will there be after it even to the years of generation and generation."* Ver. 3. *"Before it burneth fire, and behind it flameth flame: the land before it as the garden of Eden, and behind it like a desolate wilderness; and even that which escaped did not remain to it."* With four words, expressing the idea of darkness and obscurity, the day of Jehovah is described as a day of the manifestation of judgment. The words *חֹשֶׁךְ עָנָן וְעֹרֶפֶל* are applied in Deut. iv. 11 to the cloudy darkness in which Mount Sinai was enveloped, when Jehovah came down upon it in the fire; and in Ex. x. 22, the darkness which fell upon Egypt as the ninth plague is called *חֹשֶׁךְ*. *בְּשָׁחֵר וְנֹ* does not belong to what precedes, nor does it mean blackness or twilight (as Ewald and some Rabbins suppose), but "the morning dawn." The subject to *pārus* (spread) is neither *yōm* (day), which precedes it, nor *'am* (people), which follows; for neither of these yields a suitable thought at all. The subject is left indefinite: "like morning dawn is it spread over the mountains." The prophet's meaning is evident enough from what follows. He clearly refers to the bright glimmer or splendour which is seen in the sky as a swarm of locusts ap-

proaches, from the reflection of the sun's rays from their wings.<sup>1</sup> With עם רב וצוים (a people great and strong) we must consider the verb צָא (cometh) in ver. 1 as still retaining its force. Yôm (day) and 'âm (people) have the same predicate, because the army of locusts carries away the day, and makes it into a day of cloudy darkness. The darkening of the earth is mentioned in connection with the Egyptian plague of locusts in Ex. x. 15, and is confirmed by many witnesses (see the comm. on Ex. l.c.). The fire and the flame which go both before and behind the great and strong people, viz. the locusts, cannot be understood as referring to the brilliant light kindled as it were by the morning dawn, which proceeds from the fiery armies of the vengeance of God, i.e. the locusts (Umbreit), nor merely to the burning heat of the drought by which everything is consumed (ch. i. 19); but this burning heat is heightened here into devouring flames of fire, which accompany the appearing of God as He comes to judgment at the head of His army, after the analogy of the fiery phenomena connected with the previous manifestations of God, both in Egypt, where a terrible hail fell upon the land before the plague of locusts, accompanied by thunder and balls of fire (Ex. ix. 23, 24), and also at Sinai, upon which the Lord came down amidst thunder and lightning, and spoke to the people out of the fire (Ex. xix. 16-18; Dent. iv. 11, 12). The land, which had previously resembled the garden of paradise (Gen. ii. 8), was changed in consequence into a desolate wilderness. פָּלְטָה does not mean escape or deliverance, either here or in Ob. 17, but simply that which has run away or escaped. Here it signifies that part of the land which has escaped the devastation; for it is quite contrary to the usage of the language to refer לוֹ, as most commentators do, to the swarm of locusts, from which there is no escape, no deliverance (cf. 2 Sam. xv. 14, Judg. xxi. 17, Ezra ix. 13, in

<sup>1</sup> The following is the account given by the Portuguese monk Francis Alvarez, in his *Journey through Abyssinia* (Oedmann, *Vermischte Sammlungen*, vi. p. 75): "The day before the arrival of the locusts we could infer that they were coming, from a yellow reflection in the sky, proceeding from their yellow wings. As soon as this light appeared, no one had the slightest doubt that an enormous swarm of locusts was approaching." He also says, that during his stay in the town of Barua he himself saw this phenomenon, and that so vividly, that even the earth had a yellow colour from the reflection. The next day a swarm of locusts came.

all of which ל refers to the subject, to which the thing that escaped was assigned). Consequently לו can only refer to הָאֲרֵי. The perfect הִיָּתָה stands related to אָחֲרָיו, according to which the swarm of locusts had already completed the devastation.

In vers. 4-6 we have a description of this mighty army of God, and of the alarm caused by its appearance among all nations. Ver. 4. *"Like the appearance of horses is its appearance; and like riding-horses, so do they run."* Ver. 5. *"Like rumbling of chariots on the tops of the mountains do they leap, like the crackling of flame which devours stubble, like a strong people equipped for conflict."* Ver. 6. *"Before it nations tremble; all faces withdraw their redness."* The comparison drawn between the appearance of the locusts and that of horses refers chiefly to the head, which, when closely examined, bears a strong resemblance to the head of a horse, as Theodoret has already observed; a fact which gave rise to their being called *Heupferde* (hay-horses) in German. In ver. 4b the rapidity of their motion is compared to the running of riding-horses (*pârâshîm*); and in ver. 5 the noise caused by their springing motion to the rattling of chariots, the small two-wheeled war-chariots of the ancients, when driven rapidly over the rough mountain roads. The noise caused by their devouring the plants and shrubs is also compared to the burning of a flame over a stubble-field that has been set on fire, and their approach to the advance of a war force equipped for conflict. (Compare the adoption and further expansion of these similes in Rev. ix. 7, 9.) At the sight of this terrible army of God the nations tremble, so that their faces grow pale. *'Ammîm* means neither people (see at 1 Kings xxii. 28) nor the tribes of Israel, but nations generally. Joel is no doubt depicting something more here than the devastation caused by the locusts in his own day. There are differences of opinion as to the rendering of the second hemistich, which Nahum repeats in ch. ii. 11. The combination of פָּאֲרִיר with פָּרִיר, a pot (Chald., Syr., Jer., Luth., and others), is untenable, since פָּרִיר comes from פָּרַר, to break in pieces, whereas פָּאֲרִיר (= פָּאֲרִיר) is from the root פָּאֵר, *piel*, to adorn, beautify, or glorify; so that the rendering, "they gather redness," i.e. glow with fear, which has an actual but not a grammatical support in Isa. xiii. 8, is evidently worthless. We therefore understand פָּאֲרִיר, as Ab. Esr., Abul Wal., and

others have done, in the sense of *elegantia, nitor, pulchritudo*, and as referring to the splendour or healthy ruddiness of the cheeks, and take  $\text{וַיִּצֵּב}$  as an intensive form of  $\text{וַיִּצֵּב}$ , in the sense of drawing into one's self, or withdrawing, inasmuch as fear and anguish cause the blood to fly from the face and extremities to the inward parts of the body. For the fact of the face turning pale with terror, see Jer. xxx. 6.

In vers. 7-10 the comparison of the army of locusts to a well-equipped army is carried out still further; and, in the first place, by a description of the irresistible force of its advance. Ver. 7. "*They run like heroes, like warriors they climb the wall; every one goes on its way, and they do not change their paths.*" Ver. 8. "*And they do not press one another, they go every one in his path; and they fall headlong through weapons, and do not cut themselves in pieces.*" Ver. 9. "*They run about in the city, they run upon the wall, they climb into the houses, they come through the windows like a thief.*" This description applies for the most part word for word to the advance of the locusts, as Jerome (*in loc.*) and Theodoret (on ver. 8a) attest from their own observation.<sup>1</sup> They run like heroes—namely, to the assault:  $\text{וַיִּצֵּב}$  referring to an attack, as in Job xv. 26 and Ps. xviii. 30, "as their nimbleness has already been noticed in ver. 4" (Hitzig). Their climbing the walls also points to an assault. Their irresistible march to the object of their attack is the next point described. No one comes in another's way; they do not twist

<sup>1</sup> Jerome says: "We saw (*al.* heard) this lately in the province (Palestine). For when the swarms of locusts come and fill the whole atmosphere between the earth and sky, they fly in such order, according to the appointment of the commanding God, that they preserve an exact shape, just like the squares drawn upon a tessellated pavement, not diverging on either side by, so to speak, so much as a finger's breadth. 'And,' as he (the prophet) interprets the metaphor, '*through the windows they will fall, and not be destroyed.*' For there is no road impassable to locusts; they penetrate into fields, and crops, and trees, and cities, and houses, and even the recesses of the bed-chambers." And Theodoret observes on ver. 8a: "For you may see the grasshopper like a hostile army ascending the walls, and advancing along the roads, and not suffering any difficulty to disperse them, but steadily moving forward, as if according to some concerted plan." And again, on ver. 9: "And this we have frequently seen done, not merely by hostile armies, but also by locusts, which not only when flying, but by creeping along the walls, pass through the windows into the houses themselves."



(עבט) their path, *i.e.* do not diverge either to the right hand or to the left, so as to hinder one another. Even the force of arms cannot stop their advance. מִלֵּחַ is not a missile, *telum*, missile (Ges. and others), but a weapon extended or held in front (Hitzig); and the word is not only applied to a sword (2 Chron. xxiii. 10; Neh. iv. 11), but to weapons of defence (2 Chron. xxxii. 5). מַצֵּעַ, not "to wound themselves" (= מַצֵּעַ), but "to cut in pieces," used here intransitively, to cut themselves in pieces. This does no doubt transcend the nature even of the locust; but it may be explained on the ground that they are represented as an invincible army of God.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the words of ver. 9 apply, so far as the first half is concerned, both to the locusts and to an army (cf. Isa. xxxiii. 4; Nah. ii. 5); whereas the second half applies only to the former, of which Theodoret relates in the passage quoted just now, that he has frequently seen this occur (compare also Ex. x. 6).

The whole universe trembles at this judgment of God. Ver. 10. "*Before it the earth quakes, the heavens tremble: sun and moon have turned black, and the stars have withdrawn their shining.*" Ver. 11. "*And Jehovah thunders before His army, for His camp is very great, for the executor of His word is strong; for the day of Jehovah is great and very terrible, and who can endure it?*" The remark of Jerome on ver. 10, viz. that "it is not that the strength of the locusts is so great that they can move the heavens and shake the earth, but that to those who suffer

<sup>1</sup> The notion that these words refer to attempts to drive away the locusts by force of arms, in support of which Hitzig appeals to *Liv. hist.* xlii. 10, *Plinii hist. n.* xi. 29, and Hasselquist, *Reise nach Pal.* p. 225, is altogether inappropriate. All that Livy does is to speak of *ingenti agmine hominum ad colligendas eas (locustas) coacto*; and Pliny merely says, *Necare et in Syria militari imperio coguntur*. And although Hasselquist says, "Both in Asia and Europe they sometimes take the field against the locusts with all the equipments of war," this statement is decidedly false so far as Europe is concerned. In Bessarabia (according to the accounts of eye-witnesses) they are merely in the habit of scaring away the swarms of locusts that come in clouds, by making a great noise with drums, kettles, hay-forks, and other noisy instruments, for the purpose of preventing them from settling on the ground, and so driving them further. Hass's account of a pasha of Tripoli having sent 4000 soldiers against the insects only a few years ago, is far too indefinite to prove that they were driven away by the force of arms.

from such calamities, from the amount of their own terror, the heavens appear to shake and the earth to reel," is correct enough so far as the first part is concerned, but it by no means exhausts the force of the words. For, as Hitzig properly observes, the earth could only quake because of the locusts when they had settled, and the heavens could only tremble and be darkened when they were flying, so that the words would in any case be very much exaggerated. But it by no means follows from this, that מַעֲרָא is not to be taken as referring to the locusts, like מַעֲרָא in ver. 6, but to the coming of Jehovah in a storm, and that it is to be understood in this sense: "the earth quakes, the air roars at the voice of Jehovah, *i.e.* at the thunder, and storm-clouds darken the day." For although *nāthan qōlō* (shall utter His voice) in ver. 11 is to be understood as referring to the thunder, Joel is not merely describing a storm, which came when the trouble had reached its height and put an end to the plague of locusts (Credner, Hitzig, and others). מַעֲרָא cannot be taken in any other sense than that in which it occurs in ver. 3; that is to say, it can only refer to "the great people and strong," *viz.* the army of locusts, like מַעֲרָא. Heaven and earth tremble at the army of locusts, because Jehovah comes with them to judge the world (cf. Isa. xiii. 13; Nahum i. 5, 6; Jer. x. 10). The sun and moon become black, *i.e.* dark, and the stars withdraw their brightness (*ʿāsaph*, withdraw, as in 1 Sam. xiv. 19), *i.e.* they let their light shine no more. That these words affirm something infinitely greater than the darkening of the lights of heaven by storm-clouds, is evident partly from the predictions of the judgment of the wrath of the Lord that is coming upon the whole earth, and upon the imperial power (Isa. xiii. 10; Ezek. xxxii. 7), at which the whole fabric of the universe trembles and nature clothes itself in mourning, and partly from the adoption of this particular feature by Christ in His description of the last judgment (Matt. xxiv. 29; Mark xiii. 24, 25). Compare, on the other hand, the poetical description of a storm in Ps. xviii. 8 sqq., where this feature is wanting. (For further remarks, see at ch. iii. 4.) At the head of the army which is to execute His will, the Lord causes His voice of thunder to sound (*nāthan qōl*, to thunder; cf. Ps. xviii. 14, etc.). The reason for this is given in three sentences that are introduced by *kī*. Jehovah does this because His army is very great;

because this powerful army executes His word, *i.e.* His command; and because the day of judgment is so great and terrible, that no one can endure it, *i.e.* no one can stand before the fury of the wrath of the Judge (cf. Jer. x. 10; Mal. iii. 1).

Vers. 12-14. But there is still time to avert the completion of the judgment by sincere repentance and mourning; for God is merciful, and ready to forgive the penitent. Ver. 12. *"Yet even now, is the saying of Jehovah, turn ye to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning."* Ver. 13. *"And rend your heart and not your garments, and turn back to Jehovah your God; for He is gracious and merciful, long-suffering, and great in kindness, and suffers Himself to repent of the evil."* Ver. 14. *"Who knoweth He turns and repents, and leaves behind Him blessing, meat-offering and drink-offering for Jehovah your God?"* As the plague of locusts was intended to bring the people to reflect upon their conduct towards the Lord, so was the announcement of the great day of judgment and all its terrors made with no other object than to produce repentance and conversion, and thereby promote the good of the people of God. Joel therefore appends to the threatening of judgment a summons to sincere conversion to the Lord; and this he does by first of all addressing the summons to the people as a saying of Jehovah (ver. 12), and then explaining this word of God in the most emphatic manner (vers. 13, 14). The Lord God requires conversion to Himself with all the heart (cf. 1 Sam. vii. 3, and Deut. vi. 5; and for שׁוּב עַר, Hos. xiv. 2), associated with deep-rooted penitence on account of sin, which is to be outwardly manifested in fasting and mourning. But lest the people should content themselves with the outward signs of mourning, he proceeds in ver. 13 with the warning admonition, "Rend your heart, and not your garments." Rending the heart signifies contrition of heart (cf. Ps. li. 19; Ezek. xxxvi. 26). He then assigns the motive for this demand, by pointing to the mercy and grace of God, in the words of Ex. xxxiv. 6, with which the Lord made known to Moses His inmost nature, except that in the place of רַחוּם, which we find in this passage, he adds, on the ground of the facts recorded in Ezek. xxxii. 14 and 2 Sam. xxiv. 16, וְנָחָם עַל הָרָעָה. On the strength of these facts he hopes, even in the present instance, for forgiveness on the part of God, and the removal of the judgment. "Who

knoweth?" equivalent to "perhaps;" not because "too confident a hope would have had in it something offensive to Jehovah" (Hitzig), but "lest perchance they might either despair on account of the magnitude of their crimes, or the greatness of the divine clemency might make them careless" (Jerome).<sup>1</sup> **וְשׁוּב**, to turn, *sc.* from coming to judgment. **וְנָחַם** as in ver. 13. **וְהַשְׁאִיר אַחֲרָיו**, to leave behind Him, *sc.* when He returns to His throne in heaven (Hos. v. 15). *B'râkhâh*, a blessing, viz. harvest-produce for a meat-offering and drink-offering, which had been destroyed by the locusts (ch. i. 9, 13).

Vers. 15-17. To make this admonition still more emphatic, the prophet concludes by repeating the appeal for the appointment of a meeting in the temple for prayer, and even gives the litany in which the priests are to offer their supplication. Ver. 15. "*Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, proclaim a meeting.*" Ver. 16. "*Gather the people together, sanctify an assembly, bring together the old men, gather together the children and sucklings at the breasts. Let the bridegroom go out of his chamber, and the bride out of her room.*" Ver. 17. "*Between the porch and the altar are the priests, the servants of Jehovah, to weep and say, Spare, O Jehovah, Thy people, and give not up Thine inheritance to shame, so that the heathen scoff at them. Wherefore should men say among the nations, Where is their God?*" Ver. 15 is a literal repetition from ver. 1 and ch. i. 14*a*; ver. 16 a more detailed expansion of ch. i. 14*b*, in which, first of all, the people generally (**עַם**) are mentioned, and then the object of the summons explained in the words **קָרְאוּ קָהָל**, "Call a holy meeting of the congregation." But in order that none may think themselves exempt, the people are more precisely defined as old men, children, and sucklings. Even the bride and bridegroom are to give up the delight of their hearts, and take part in the penitential and mournful worship. No age, no rank, is to stay away, because no one, not even the suckling, is free from sin; but all, without exception, are exposed to the judgment. "A

<sup>1</sup> "He speaks after the manner of a terrified conscience, which is lifted up again with difficulty after a season of affliction, and begins to aspire after hope and the mercy of God. Moreover, the expression 'who knoweth' is a Hebrew phrase, which does not indicate doubt, but rather affirmation, coupled with desire, as if we were to say, 'And yet surely God will turn again.'"—LUTHER, *Enarrat. in Joelem, Opp.*, Jena 1703, p. iii.

stronger proof of the deep and universal guilt of the whole nation could not be found, than that on the great day of penitence and prayer, even new-born infants were to be carried in their arms" (Umbreit). The penitential supplication of the whole nation is to be brought before the Lord by the priests as the mediators of the nation. **יִבְכּוּ** in ver. 17 is jussive, like **יִצְאוּ** in ver. 16, though Hitzig disputes this, but on insufficient grounds. The allusion to the priests in the former could only be unsuitable, if they were merely commanded to go to the temple like the rest of the people. But it is not to this that ver. 17 refers, but to the performance of their official duty, when the people had assembled for the penitential festival. They were to stand between the porch of the temple and the altar of burnt-offering, *i.e.* immediately in front of the door of the holy place, and there with tears entreat the Lord, who was enthroned in the sanctuary, not to give up the people of His possession (*nachălāh* as in 1 Kings viii. 51; cf. Deut. iv. 20, xxxii. 9) to the reproach of being scoffed at by the heathen. **לְמִשְׁלֵבָם גּוֹיִם** is rendered by Luther and others, "that heathen rule over them," after the ancient versions; and Ps. cvi. 41, Deut. xv. 6, and Lam. v. 8, might be appealed to in support of this rendering. But although grammatically allowable, it is not required by the parallelism, as Hengstenberg maintains. For even if the reproach of Israel could consist in the fact that they, the inheritance of the Lord, were subjected to the government of heathen, this thought is very remote from the idea of the passage before us, where there is no reference at all in the threatening of punishment to subjection to the heathen, but simply to the devastation of the land. **מִשֵּׁל** with **בְּ** also signifies to utter a proverb (= to scoff) at any one, for which Ezekiel indeed makes use of **מִשֵּׁל מִשֵּׁל** (Ezek. xvii. 2, xviii. 2, and in xii. 23 and xviii. 3 construed with **בְּ**); but it is evident that *māshal* was sometimes used alone in this sense, from the occurrence of *mōsh'lim* in Num. xxi. 27 as a term applied to the inventors of proverbs, and also of *m'shōl* as a proverb or byword in Job xvii. 6, whether we take the word as an infinitive or a substantive. This meaning, as Marck observes, is rendered probable both by the connection with **חֲרִפָּה**, and also by the parallel clause which follows, *viz.* "Wherefore should men among the heathen say," etc., more especially if we reflect that Joel had in his mind not

Deut. xv. 6, which has nothing in common with the passage before us except the verb *māshal*, but rather Deut. xxviii. 37, where Moses not only threatens the people with transportation to another land for their apostasy from the Lord, and that they shall become "an astonishment, a proverb (*māshāl*), and a by-word" among all nations, but (vers. 38, 40-42) also threatens them with the devastation of their seed-crops, their vineyards, and their olive-grounds by locusts. Compare also 1 Kings ix. 7, 8, where not only the casting out of Israel among the heathen, but even the destruction of the temple, is mentioned as the object of ridicule on the part of the heathen; also the combination of *לְחַרְפָּה* and *לְמַשָּׁל* in Jer. xxiv. 9. But ver. 19 is decisive in favour of this view of *לְמַשָּׁל בָּם ג'*. The Lord there promises that He will send His people corn, new wine, and oil, to their complete satisfaction, and no longer make them a reproach among the nations; so that, according to this, it was not subjugation or transportation by heathen foes that gave occasion to the scoffing of the nations at Israel, but the destruction of the harvest by the locusts. The saying among the nations, "Where is their God?" is unquestionably a sneer at the covenant relation of Jehovah to Israel; and to this Jehovah could offer no inducement, since the reproach would fall back upon Himself. Compare for the fact itself, Ex. xxxii. 12, Mic. vii. 10, and Ps. cxv. 2. Thus the prayer closes with the strongest reason why God should avert the judgment, and one that could not die away without effect.

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## II. THE PROMISE OF GOD TO AVERT THE JUDGMENT, AND BESTOW AN ABUNDANT BLESSING.—CHAP. II. 18-III. 21.

The promise, which the Lord conveys to His people through the prophet in answer to the prayer of the priests, refers to the present and the future. In the first part, relating to the present and the times immediately following (ch. ii. 19-27), they are promised the destruction of the army of locusts, the gift of a teacher for righteousness, and the pouring out of a plentiful fall of rain for abundant harvests. To this there are appended, by means of the formula, "And it shall come to pass

afterward" (וְהָיָה אַחֲרָי כֵן), in ch. ii. 28 (Heb. Bib. iii. 1), the promise of a higher blessing through the outpouring of the Spirit of God upon all flesh, the judgment upon the nations that are hostile to Israel, and the eternal deliverance and benediction of the church of God (ch. ii. 28–iii. 21). The blessing which the Lord promises for the time just coming, and for the remote future, is not a twofold one, so that the outpouring of the fertilizing rain and the outpouring of the Spirit of God answer to one another on the one hand, and the destruction of the army of locusts and that of the army of men on the other, but a threefold one, as v. Hofmann has shown, viz.: What the raising up of the teacher for righteousness, the destruction of the army of locusts, and the return of a fruitful season are to the time present, that will the outpouring of the Spirit of God upon all flesh, the judgment upon the army of the heathen world, and the eternal salvation and glorification of the people of God, be in the last times.

DESTRUCTION OF THE ARMY OF LOCUSTS, AND RENEWAL OF THE SPIRITUAL AND EARTHLY BLESSINGS.—CHAP. II. 18–27.

Vers. 18 and 19a contain the historical statement, that in consequence of the penitential prayer of the priests, the Lord displayed His mercy to His people, and gave them a promise, the first part of which follows in vers. 19–27. Vers. 18, 19a. "*Then Jehovah was jealous for His land, and had compassion upon His people. And Jehovah answered, and said.*" The grammar requires that we should take the imperfects with *Vav consec.* in these clauses, as statements of what actually occurred. The passages in which imperfects with *Vav cons.* are either really or apparently used in a prophetic announcement of the future, are of a different kind; e.g. in ver. 23, where we find one in a subordinate clause preceded by perfects. As the verb וַיֹּאמֶר describes the promise which follows, as an *answer* given by Jehovah to His people, we must assume that the priests had really offered the penitential and supplicatory prayer to which the prophet had summoned them in ver. 17. The circumstance that this is not expressly mentioned, neither warrants us in rendering the verbs in ver. 17 in the present, and taking them as statements of what the priest really did (Hitzig), nor in

changing the historical tenses in vers. 18, 19 into futures. We have rather simply to supply the execution of the prophet's command between vers. 17 and 18.  $\text{אֲנִי}$  with  $\text{לְ}$ , to be jealous for a person, *i.e.* to show the jealousy of love towards him, as in Ex. xxxix. 25, Zech. i. 14 (see at Ex. xx. 5).  $\text{לִפְנֵי}$  as in Ex. ii. 6, 1 Sam. xxiii. 21. In the answer from Jehovah which follows, the three features in the promise are not given according to their chronological order; but in order to add force to the description, we have first of all, in ver. 19, a promise of the relief of the distress at which both man and beast had sighed, and then, in ver. 20, a promise of the destruction of the devastator; and it is not till vers. 21-23b that the third feature is mentioned in the further development of the promise, *viz.* the teacher for righteousness. Then finally, in vers. 23c-27, the fertilizing fall of rain, and the plentiful supply of the fruits of the ground that had been destroyed by the locusts, are more elaborately described, as the first blessing bestowed upon the people.

The promise runs as follows. Ver. 19b. "*Behold, I send you the corn, and the new wine, and the oil, that ye may become satisfied therewith; and will no more make you a reproach among the nations.*" Ver. 20. "*And I will remove the northern one far away from you, and drive him into the land of drought and desert; its van into the front sea, and its rear into the hinder sea: and its stink will ascend, and its corruption ascend, for it has done great things.*" The Lord promises, first of all, a compensation for the injury done by the devastation, and then the destruction of the devastation itself, so that it may do no further damage. Ver. 19 stands related to ch. i. 11. *Shálach*, to send: the corn is said to be sent instead of given (Hos. ii. 10), because God sends the rain which causes the corn to grow. Israel shall no longer be a reproach among the nations, "as a poor people, whose God is unable to assist it, or has evidently forsaken it" (Ros.). Marck and Schmieder have already observed that this promise is related to the prayer, that He would not give up His inheritance to the reproach of the scoffings of the heathen (ver. 17: see the comm. on this verse).  $\text{צָרַח}$ , the northern one, as an epithet applied to the swarm of locusts, furnishes no decisive argument in favour of the allegorical interpretation of the plague of locusts. For even if locusts generally come to Palestine from the south,



out of the Arabian desert, the remark made by Jerome, to the effect that "the swarms of locusts are *more* generally brought by the south wind than by the north," shows that the rule is not without its exceptions. "Locusts come and go with all winds" (Oedmann, ii. p. 97). In Arabia, Niebuhr (*Beschreib.* p. 169) saw swarms of locusts come from south, west, north, and east. Their home is not confined to the desert of Arabia, but they are found in all the sandy deserts, which form the southern boundaries of the lands that were, and to some extent still are, the seat of cultivation, viz. in the Sahara, the Libyan desert, Arabia, and Irak (Credner, p. 285); and Niebuhr (*l.c.*) saw a large tract of land, on the road from Mosul to Nisibis, completely covered with young locusts. They are also met with in the Syrian desert, from which swarms could easily be driven to Palestine by a north-east wind, without having to fly across the mountains of Lebanon. Such a swarm as this might be called the *ts'phōnī*, i.e. the northern one, or northerner, even if the north was not its true home. For it cannot be philologically proved that *ts'phōnī* can only denote one whose home is in the north. Such explanations as the Typhonian, the barbarian, and others, which we meet with in Hitzig, Ewald, and Meier, and which are obtained by alterations of the text or far-fetched etymologies, must be rejected as arbitrary. That which came from the north shall also be driven away by the north wind, viz. the great mass into the dry and desert land, i.e. the desert of Arabia, the van into the front (or eastern) sea, i.e. the Dead Sea (Ezek. xlvii. 18; Zech. xiv. 8), the rear into the hinder (or western) sea, i.e. the Mediterranean (cf. Deut. xi. 24). This is, of course, not to be understood as signifying that the dispersion was to take place in all these three directions at one and the same moment, in which case three different winds would blow at the same time; but it is a rhetorical picture of rapid and total destruction, which is founded upon the idea that the wind rises in the north-west, then turns to the north, and finally to the north-east, so that the van of the swarm is driven into the eastern sea, the great mass into the southern desert, and the rear into the western sea. The explanation given by Hitzig and others—namely, that *pānīm* signifies the eastern border, and *sōph* the western border of the swarm, which covered the entire breadth of the land, and was driven from north to south—cannot

be sustained. Joel mentions both the van and the rear after the main body, simply because they both meet with the same fate, both falling into the sea and perishing there; whereupon the dead bodies are thrown up by the waves upon the shore, where their putrefaction fills the air with stench. The perishing of locusts in seas and lakes is attested by many authorities.<sup>1</sup> For *וַיִּשָּׂא הַיָּם*, compare Isa. xxxiv. 3 and Amos iv. 10. *וַיִּשָּׂא* is *ἀπ. λεγ.*; but the meaning corruption is sustained partly by the parallelism, and partly by the Syriac verb, which means to be dirty. The army of locusts had deserved this destruction, because it had done great things. *וַיַּעַשׂ לְעוֹלָם*, to do great things, is affirmed of men or other creatures, with the subordinate idea of haughtiness; so that it not only means he has done a mighty thing, accomplished a mighty devastation, but is used in the same sense as the German *grossthun*, viz. to brag or be proud of one's strength. It does not follow from this, however, that the locusts are simply figurative, and represent hostile nations. For however true it may be that sin and punishment presuppose accountability (Hengst., Hävernicks), the conclusion drawn from this—namely, that they cannot be imputed to irrational creatures—is incorrect. The very opposite is taught by the Mosaic law, according to which God will punish every act of violence done by beasts upon man (Gen. ix. 5), whilst the ox which killed a man was commanded to be stoned (Ex. xxi. 28-32).

This promise is carried out still further in what follows; and Joel summons the earth (ver. 21), the beasts of the field (ver. 22), and the sons of Zion (ver. 23) to joy and exultation at this mighty act of the Lord, by which they have been delivered from the threatening destruction. Ver. 21. "*Fear not, O earth! exult and rejoice: for Jehovah doeth great things!*" Ver. 22. "*Fear ye not, O beasts of the field! for the pastures of*"

<sup>1</sup> Even Pliny says (*h. n. xi. 29*), *Gregatim sublato vento in maria aut stagna decidunt*; and Jerome has the following remarks on this verse: "Even in our own times we have seen the land of Judæa covered by swarms of locusts, which, as soon as the wind rose, were precipitated into the first and latest seas, i.e. the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean. And when the shores of both seas were filled with heaps of dead locusts, which the waters had thrown up, their corruption and stench became so noxious, that even the atmosphere was corrupted, and both man and beasts suffered from the consequent pestilence."

*the desert become green, for the tree bears its fruit; fig-tree and vine yield their strength. Ver. 23. And ye sons of Zion, exult and rejoice in the Lord your God; for He giveth you the teacher for righteousness, and causes to come down to you a rain-fall, early rain and latter rain, first of all."* The soil had suffered from the drought connected with the swarms of locusts (ch. i. 9); the beasts of the field had groaned on account of the destruction of all the plants and vegetation of every kind (ch. i. 18); the men had sighed over the unparalleled calamity that had befallen both land and people. The prophet here calls to all of them not to fear, but to exult and rejoice, and gives in every case an appropriate reason for the call. In that of the earth, he introduces the thought that Jehovah had done great things—had destroyed the foe that did great things; in that of the beasts, he points to the fresh verdure of the pastures, and the growth of the fruit upon the trees; in that of men, he lays stress upon a double fact, viz. the gift of a teacher for righteousness, and the pouring out of a plentiful rain. In this description we have to notice the rhetorical individualizing, which forms its peculiar characteristic, and serves to explain not only the distinction between the earth, the beasts of the field, and the sons of Zion, but the distribution of the divine blessings among the different members of the creation that are mentioned here. For, so far as the fact itself is concerned, the threefold blessing from God benefits all three classes of the earthly creation: the rain does good not only to the sons of Zion, or to men, but also to animals and to the soil; and so again do the green of the pastures and the fruits of the trees; and lastly, even the *לַעֲשׂוֹת יְהוָה* not only blesses the earth, but also the beasts and men upon it. It is only through overlooking this rhetorico-poetical distribution, that any one could infer from ver. 22b, that because the fruits are mentioned here as the ordinary food of animals, in direct contrast to Gen. i. 28, 29, where the fruit of the trees is assigned to men for food, the beasts of the field signify the heathen. The perfects in the explanatory clauses of these three verses are all to be taken alike, and not to be rendered in the preterite in ver. 21, and in the present in vers. 22 and 23. The perfect is not only applied to actions, which the speaker looks upon from his own standpoint as actually completed, as having taken place, or as

things belonging to the past, but to actions which the will or the lively fancy of the speaker regards as being as good as completed, in other words, assumes as altogether unconditional and certain, and to which in modern languages we should apply the present (Ewald, § 135, *a*, etc.). The latter is the sense in which it is used here, since the prophet sets forth the divine promise as a fact, which is unquestionably certain and complete, even though its historical realization has only just begun, and extends into the nearer or more remote future. The divine act over which the prophet calls upon them to rejoice, is not to be restricted to the destruction of those swarms of locusts that had at that time invaded Judah, and the revivification of dying nature, but is an act of God that is being constantly repeated whenever the same circumstances occur, or whose influence continues as long as this earth lasts; since it is a tangible pledge, that to all eternity, as is stated in vers. 26, 27, the people of the Lord will not be put to shame. The "sons of Zion" are not merely the inhabitants of Zion itself, but the dwellers in the capital are simply mentioned as the representatives of the kingdom of Judah. As the plague of locusts fell not upon Jerusalem only, but upon the whole land, the call to rejoicing must refer to all the inhabitants of the land (ch. i. 2, 14). They are to rejoice in Jehovah, who has proved Himself to be their God by the removal of the judgment and the bestowal of a fresh blessing. This blessing is twofold in its nature. He gives them *אֶת־הַמֶּוֹרֵחַ לְצִדְקָה*. From time immemorial there has been a diversity of opinion as to the meaning of these words. Most of the Rabbins and earlier commentators have followed the Chaldee and Vulgate, and taken *mōreh* in the sense of "teacher;" but others, in no small number, have taken it in the sense of "early rain," *e.g.* Ab. Ezra, Kimchi, Tanch., Calvin, and most of the Calvinistic and modern commentators. But although *mōreh* is unquestionably used in the last clause of this verse in the sense of early rain; in every other instance this is called *yōreh* (Deut. xi. 14; Jer. v. 24); for Ps. lxxxiv. 7 cannot be brought into the account since the meaning is disputed. Consequently the conjecture is a very natural one, that in the last clause of the verse Joel selected the form *mōreh*, instead of *yōreh*, to signify early rain, simply on account of the previous occurrence of *hammōreh* in the sense

of "teacher," and for the sake of the unison. This rendering of *hammōreh* is not only favoured by the article placed before it, since neither *mōreh* = *yōreh* (early rain), nor the corresponding and tolerably frequent *malqōsh* (latter rain), ever has the article, and no reason can be discovered why *mōreh* should be defined by the article here if it signified early rain; but it is decisively confirmed by the following word לְיָדָהּ, which is quite inapplicable to early rain, since it cannot mean either "in just measure," or "at the proper time," or "in becoming manner," as *ts'dāqāh* is only used in the ethical sense of righteousness, and is never met with *sensu physico*, neither in 2 Sam. xix. 29, Neh. ii. 20, nor in Ps. xxiii. 3 and Lev. xix. 36, where moreover צָדִק occurs. For מַעֲלֵי צָדִק (in the Psalm) are not straight or right ways, but ways of righteousness (spiritual ways); and although מֵאֲנֵי צָדִק, מֵאֲנֵי צָדִק, are no doubt really correct scales and weight-stones, this is simply because they correspond to what is ethically right, so that we cannot deduce from this the idea of correct measure in the case of the rain. Ewald and Umbreit, who both of them recognise the impossibility of proving that *ts'dāqāh* is used in the physical sense of correctness or correct measure, have therefore adopted the rendering "rain for justification," or "for righteousness;" Ewald regarding the rain as a sign that they are adopted again into the righteousness of God, whilst Umbreit takes it as a manifestation of eternal righteousness in the flowing stream of fertilizing grace. But apart from the question, whether these thoughts are in accordance with the doctrine of Scripture, they are by no means applicable here, where the people have neither doubted the revelation of the righteousness of God, nor prayed to God for justification, but have rather appealed to the compassion and grace of God in the consciousness of their sin and guilt, and prayed to be spared and rescued from destruction (vers. 13, 17). By the "teacher for righteousness," we are to understand neither the prophet Joel only (v. Hofmann), nor the Messiah directly (Abarbanel), nor the ideal teacher or collective body of messengers from God (Hengstenberg), although there is some truth at the foundation of all these suppositions. The direct or exclusive reference to the Messiah is at variance with the context, since all the explanatory clauses in vers. 21-23 treat of blessings or gifts of

God, which were bestowed at any rate partially at that particular time. Moreover, in ver. 23, the sending of the rain-fall is represented by יִזְרֶה (imperf. c. *Vav cons.*), if not as the consequence, of the sending of the teacher for righteousness, at any rate as a contemporaneous event. These circumstances apparently favour the application of the expression to the prophet Joel. Nevertheless, it is by no means probable that Joel describes himself directly as the teacher for righteousness, or speaks of his being sent to the people as the object of exultation. No doubt he had induced the people to turn to the Lord, and to offer penitential supplication for His mercy through his call to repentance, and thereby effected the consequent return of rain and fruitful seasons; but his address and summons would not have had this result, if the people had not been already instructed by Moses, by the priests, and by other prophets before himself, concerning the ways of the Lord. All of these were teachers for righteousness, and are included under *hammōreh*. Still we must not stop at them. As the blessings of grace, at the reception of which the people were to rejoice, did not merely consist, as we have just observed, in the blessings which came to it at that time, or in Joel's days, but also embraced those which were continually bestowed upon it by the Lord; we must not exclude the reference to the Messiah, to whom Moses had already pointed as the prophet whom the Lord would raise up unto them, and to whom they were to hearken (Deut. xviii. 18, 19), but must rather regard the sending of the Messiah as the final fulfilment of this promise. This view answers to the context, if we simply notice that Joel mentions here both the spiritual and material blessings which the Lord is conveying to His people, and then in what follows expounds the material blessings still further in vers. 23c-27, and the spiritual blessings in vers. 28-32 and ch. iii. They are both of them consequences of the gift of the teacher for righteousness. Hence the expansion of the earthly saving gifts is attached by יִזְרֶה with *Vav cons.* Joel mentions first of all *geshem*, a rain-fall, or plentiful rain for the fertilizing of the soil, and then defines it more exactly as early rain, which fell in the autumn at the sowing time and promoted the germination and growth of the seed, and latter rain, which occurred in the spring shortly before the time of harvest and brought the crops to maturity

(see at Lev. xxvi. 3). *בְּרִאשׁוֹן*, in the beginning, *i.e.* first (= *רִאשׁוֹנָה* in Gen. xxxiii. 2, just as *בְּרִאשׁוֹן* is used in Lev. ix. 15 for *בְּרִאשׁוֹנָה* in Num. x. 13), not in the first month (Chald., etc.), or in the place of *בְּבְרִאשׁוֹנָה*, as before (LXX., Vulg., and others). For *בְּרִאשׁוֹן* corresponds to *אֶחָד־רִיבֹן* in ver. 28 (Heb. iii. 1), as Ewald, Meier, and Hengstenberg admit. *First of all* the pouring out of a plentiful rain (an individualizing expression for all kinds of earthly blessings, chosen here with reference to the opposite of blessing occasioned by the drought); and *after that*, the pouring out of the spiritual blessing (ch. ii. 28–iii. 21).

Vers. 24–27. Effects of the rain. Ver. 24. *“And the barns become full of corn, and the vats flow over with new wine and oil. Ver. 25. And I repay to you the years which the locust has eaten, the licker, and the devourer, and the gnawer, my great army which I sent among you. Ver. 26. And ye will eat, eat and be satisfied, and praise the name of Jehovah your God, who hath done wondrously with you; and my people shall not be put to shame to all eternity. Ver. 27. And ye will know that I am in the midst of Israel, and I (am) Jehovah your God, and none else, and my people shall not be put to shame to all eternity.”* Ver. 24 is practically the same as ver. 19a, and the counterpart to ch. i. 10–12. *שָׁקַץ* from *שָׁקַץ*, to run, *hiphil* only here and ch. iv. 13, to run over, to overflow; *pilel*, Ps. lxx. 10, *shōqēq*, to cause to overflow. *יִקְבִּים*, the vats of the wine-presses, into which the wine flows when trodden out; here it also applies to the vats of the oil-presses, into which the oil ran as it was pressed out. Through these bountiful harvests God would repay to the people the years, *i.e.* the produce of the years, which the locusts ate. The plural, *shānīm*, furnishes no certain proof that Joel referred in ch. i. to swarms of locusts of several successive years; but is used either with indefinite generality, as in Gen. xxi. 7, or with a distinct significance, viz. as a poetical expression denoting the greatness and violence of the devastation. On the different names of the locusts, see at ch. i. 4. It is to be observed here that the copula stands before the last two names, but not before *yeleq*, so that the last three names belong to one another as co-ordinates (Hitzig), *i.e.* they are merely different epithets used for *'arbeh*, the locusts.—Ver. 26. On the reception of these benefits the people will praise the Lord, who has shown it such wondrous grace, *lit.* has acted

towards it even to the doing of wonders.—Ver. 27. They will learn thereby that Jehovah is present among His people, and the only true God, who does not suffer His people to be put to shame. The repetition of *לֹא יִבְשׁוּ וְנִי*, by which the promised grace is guaranteed to the people for all ages, serves as a rhetorical rounding off of the section (see at ch. ii. 20).

OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD UPON ALL FLESH; JUDGMENT UPON THE WORLD OF NATIONS, AND ETERNAL DELIVERANCE AND GLORIFICATION OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD.—CHAP. II. 28—III. 21 (HEB. BIB. CHAP. III. AND IV.).

These three distinct features in the higher blessing set before the congregation of the Lord are practically connected very closely together: inasmuch as, with the outpouring of the Spirit of God upon all flesh, the judgment breaks upon the ungodly world; and with the judgment not only does the rescue of the true worshippers of God ensue, but the sanctification and glorification of the kingdom of God begin. Consequently we do not find these three features kept rigidly separate in the prophetic announcement; but just as in ch. ii. 28–32 (ch. iii. according to the ordinary division of the chapters) the signs of the dawning of the judgment are appended to the outpouring of the Spirit of God, so in ch. iii. (Heb. etc. ch. iv.) the description of the judgment is framed as it were in the prediction of the restoration of Judah (ver. 1), and of the salvation and transfiguration of Zion (vers. 16, 17); and in vers. 18–21 the eternal glorification of the kingdom of God is interwoven, by way of contrast, into the lasting devastation of the power of the world.

Vers. 28–32 (Heb. ch. iii.). OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD, AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF JUDGMENT.<sup>1</sup>—Ver. 28.

*“And it will come to pass afterwards, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, and your young men see visions.*

*Ver. 29. And also upon the men-servants and maid-servants I will put out my Spirit in those days.”* As *’achārē-khēn* points back to

<sup>1</sup> Among other special expositions of these verses, see Hengstenberg's *Christology*, vol. i. p. 326 sqq. translation.



*bārī'shōn* in ver. 23, the formula *v'hāyāh achārē-khēn* describes the outpouring of the Spirit as a second and later consequence of the gift of the teacher for righteousness. *פָּשַׁף*, to pour out, signifies communication in rich abundance, like a rain-fall or water-fall. For the communication of the Spirit of God was not entirely wanting to the covenant nation from the very first. In fact, the Spirit of God was the only inward bond between the Lord and His people; but it was confined to the few whom God endowed as prophets with the gift of His Spirit. This limitation was to cease in the future.<sup>1</sup> What Moses expressed as a wish—namely, that the people were all prophets, and the Lord would put His Spirit upon them (Num. xi. 29)—was to be fulfilled in the future. *Rūāch Y'hōvāh* is not the first principle of the physico-creaturely life (*i.e.* not equivalent to *rūāch Elohīm* in Gen. i. 2), but that of the spiritual or ethical and religious life of man, which filled the prophets under the Old Testament as a spirit of prophecy; consequently Joel describes its operations under this form. "All flesh" signifies all men. The idea that it embraces the irrational animals, even the locusts (Credner), is rejected with perfect justice by Hitzig as an inconceivable thought, and one unheard-of in the Bible; but he is wrong in adding that the Old Testament does not teach a communication of the Spirit of God to all men, but limits it to the people of Israel. A decided protest is entered against this by Gen. vi. 3, where Jehovah threatens that He will no longer let His Spirit rule *bā'ādām*, *i.e.* in the human race, because it has become *bāsār* (flesh). *Bāsār*, as contrasted with *rūāch Y'hōvāh*, always denotes human nature regarded as incapacitated for spiritual and divine life. Even in this verse we must not restrict the expression "all flesh" to the members of the covenant nation, as most of the commentators have done; for whatever truth there may be in the remark

<sup>1</sup> "There is no doubt that the prophet promises something greater here than the fathers had experienced under the law. We know that the grace of the Holy Spirit flourished even among the ancient people; but the prophet promises here not what the faithful had formerly experienced, but something greater. And this may be gathered from the verb 'to pour' which he employs. For *פָּשַׁף* does not mean merely to give in drops, but to pour out in great abundance. But God did not pour out the Holy Spirit so abundantly or copiously under the law, as He has since the manifestation of Christ."—CALVIN.

made by Calovius and others (compare Hengstenberg, *Christol.* i. p. 328 transl.), that the following clause, "your sons, your daughters, your old men, your young men, and men-servants and maid-servants," contains a specification of בְּלִבָּשָׁר, it by no means follows with certainty from this, that the word *all* does not do away with the limitation to one particular nation, but merely that in this one nation even the limits of sex, age, and rank are abolished; since it cannot be proved that the specification in vers. 2 and 3 is intended to exhaust the idea of "all flesh." Moreover, as the prophecy of Joel had respect primarily to Judah, Joel may primarily have brought into prominence, and specially singled out of the general idea of *kol-bāsār* in vers. 28 and 29, only those points that were of importance to his contemporaries, viz. that all the members of the covenant nation would participate in this outpouring of the Spirit, without regard to sex, age, or rank; and in so doing, he may have looked away from the idea of the entire human race, including all nations, which is involved in the expression "all flesh." We shall see from ver. 32 that this last thought was not a strange one to the prophet. In the specification of the communication of the Spirit, the different forms which it assumes are rhetorically distributed as follows: to the sons and daughters, prophesying is attributed; to the old, dreams; to the young, sights or visions. But it by no means follows from this, that each of these was peculiar to the age mentioned. For the assertion, that the Spirit of God only manifests itself in the weakened mind of the old man by dreams and visions of the night; that the vigorous and lively fancy of the youth or man has sights by day, or true visions; and lastly, that in the soul of the child the Spirit merely works as *furor sacer* (Tychs., Credner, Hitzig, and others), cannot be historically sustained. According to Num. xii. 6, visions and dreams are the two forms of the prophetic revelation of God; and נִבִּי is the most general manifestation of the prophetic gift, which must not be restricted to the ecstatic state associated with prophesying. The meaning of this rhetorical individualizing, is simply that their sons, daughters, old persons, and youths, would receive the Spirit of God with all its gifts. The outpouring of the Spirit upon slaves (men-servants and maidens) is connected by *v'gam*, as being something very extraordinary, and under existing cir-

cumstances not to be expected. Not a single case occurs in the whole of the Old Testament of a slave receiving the gift of prophecy. Amos, indeed, was a poor shepherd servant, but not an actual slave. And the communication of this gift to slaves was irreconcilable with the position of slaves under the Old Testament. Consequently even the Jewish expositors could not reconcile themselves to this announcement. The LXX., by rendering it ἐπὶ τοὺς δούλους μου καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς δούλας μου, have put servants of God in the place of the slaves of men; and the Pharisees refused to the ὄχλος even a knowledge of the law (John vii. 49). The gospel has therefore also broken the fetters of slavery.

Judgment upon all nations goes side by side with the outpouring of the Spirit of God. Ver. 30. *"And I give wonders in the heavens and on earth, blood, fire, and pillars of smoke."* Ver. 31. *"The sun will turn into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the day of Jehovah, the great and terrible (day), comes."* Ver. 32. *"And it comes to pass, every one who shall call upon the name of Jehovah will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem will be fugitives, as Jehovah hath said, and among those that are left will be those whom Jehovah calls."* With the word מִן, ver. 3 is attached to ver. 2 as a simple continuation (Hitzig). The wonders which God will give in the heavens and upon earth are the forerunners of judgment. *Mōph'ṭhām* (see at Ex. iv. 21) are extraordinary and marvellous natural phenomena. The wonders on earth are mentioned first, in ver. 30b; then in ver. 31 those in the heavens. Blood and fire recal to mind the plagues which fell upon Egypt as signs of the judgment: the blood, the changing of the water of the Nile into blood (Ex. vii. 17); the fire, the balls of fire which fell to the earth along with the hail (Ex. ix. 24). Blood and fire point to bloodshed and war. *Timrōth 'āshān* signifies cloud-pillars (here and in Song of Sol. iii. 6), whether we regard the form *timrōth* as original, and trace it to *timrāh* and the root *tāmar*, or prefer the reading מִן, which we meet with in many codices and editions, and take the word as a derivative of *yāmar* = *mūr*, as Hengstenberg does (*Christol.* i. p. 334 transl.). This sign has its type in the descent of Jehovah upon Sinai, at which the whole mountain smoked, and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a smelting-furnace (Ex. xix. 18). We have not to think,

therefore, of columns of cloud ascending from basons of fire, carried in front of caravans or armies on the march to show the way (see at Song of Sol. iii. 6), but of pillars of cloud, which roll up from burning towns in time of war (Isa. ix. 17). Ver. 31. In the heavens the sun is darkened, and the moon assumes a dull, blood-red appearance. These signs also have their type in the Egyptian plague of darkness (Ex. x. 21 sqq.). The darkening and extinction of the lights of heaven are frequently mentioned, either as harbingers of approaching judgment, or as signs of the breaking of the day of judgment (it was so in ch. ii. 2, 10, and is so again in ch. iii. 14: see also Isa. xiii. 10, xxxiv. 4; Jer. iv. 23; Ezek. xxxii. 1-8; Amos viii. 9; Matt. xxiv. 29; Mark xiii. 24; Luke xxi. 25). What we have to think of here, is not so much periodically returning phenomena of nature, or eclipses of the sun and moon, as extraordinary (not ecliptic) obscurations of the sun and moon, such as frequently occur as accompaniments to great catastrophes in human history.<sup>1</sup> And these earthly and celestial phenomena are forerunners and signs of the approaching or bursting judgment; not only so far as subjective faith is concerned, from the impression which is made upon the human mind by rare and terrible phenomena of nature, exciting a feeling of anxious expectation as to the things that are about to happen,<sup>2</sup> but also in their real connection with the onward progress of humanity towards its divinely appointed goal, which may be explained from the calling of man to be the

<sup>1</sup> Compare O. Zöckler, *Theologia Natural* i. p. 420, where reference is made to Humboldt (*Kosmos*, iii. 413-17), who cites no fewer than seventeen extraordinary cases of obscuration of the sun from the historical tradition of past ages, which were occasioned, not by the moon, but by totally different circumstances, such as diminished intensity in the photosphere, unusually large spots in the sun, extraneous admixtures in our own atmosphere, such as trade-wind dust, inky rain, sand rain, etc.; and many of which took place in most eventful years, such as 45 B.C., A.D. 29 (the year of the Redeemer's death), 358, 360, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Calvin has taken too one-sided and subjective a view of the matter, when he gives the following explanation of ver. 31: "What is said here of the sun and moon—namely, that the sun will be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood—is metaphorical, and signifies that the Lord will fill the whole universe with signs of His wrath, which will paralyze men with fear, as if all nature were changed into a thing of horror. For just as the sun and moon are witnesses of the paternal favour of God towards us, while they give light in their turns to the earth, so, on the

lord of the earth, though it has not yet received from science its due recognition and weight; in accordance with which connection, they show "that the eternal motion of the heavenly worlds is also appointed by the world-governing righteousness of God; so that the continued secret operation of this peculiar quality manifests itself through a strong cosmico-uranian symbolism, in facts of singular historical significance" (Zoeckler, *l. c.*). For ver. 31*b*, see at ch. ii. 1, 11. But it is only by the world and its children that the terrible day of the Lord is to be feared; to the children of God it brings redemption (Luke xxi. 28). Whoever calls upon the name of Jehovah, *i.e.* the believing worshippers of the Lord, will be exempted from the judgment. "Calling upon the name of Jehovah" signifies not only the public worship of God, but inward worship also, in which the confession of the mouth is also an expression of the heart. Upon Mount Zion will be *p'letáh*, *i.e.* not deliverance, but that which has escaped, or, in a collective sense, those who have escaped the judgment, as the synonym *s'ridim*, which follows, clearly shows. Mount Zion and Jerusalem are not mentioned here as the capital of the kingdom of Judah, but, according to their spiritual significance, as the place where the Lord was enthroned in the sanctuary in the midst of His people; that is to say, as the central spot of the kingdom of God. Consequently it is not "to the whole nation of Judah as such that deliverance is promised, on the assumption that in those times of distress the population of the land would have streamed to

other hand, the prophet affirms that they will be the heralds of an angry and offended God. . . . By the darkness of the sun, the turning of the moon into blood, and the black vapour of smoke, the prophet meant to express the thought, that wherever men turned their eyes, everywhere, both above and below, many things would meet the eye that would fill them with terror. So that it is just as if he had said, that there had never been such a state of misery in the world, nor so many fierce signs of the wrath of God." For example, the assertion that they "are metaphorical expressions" cannot possibly be sustained, but is at variance with the scriptural view of the deep inward connection between heaven and earth, and more particularly with the scriptural teaching, that with the last judgment the present heavens and present earth will perish, and the creation of a new heaven and new earth will ensue. Moreover, the circumstance that a belief in the significance of these natural phenomena is met with in all nations, favours their real (not merely imaginary) connection with the destinies of humanity.

Jerusalem" (Hitzig), but only to those who call upon the name of the Lord, *i.e.* to the true worshippers of God, upon whom the Spirit of God is poured out. The words "בְּאִשֶּׁר אָמַר" are not synonymous with "נָאֻם" or "דִּבֶּר" (ch. iv. 8; Isa. i. 20, xl. 5, etc.), but point to a prophetic word already known, viz. to Ob. 17, where the saying of the Lord, that in the midst of the judgment there would be rescued ones upon Mount Zion, occurs word for word. "בְּיָמֵי הַהֵוא" also depends upon "וְיִשְׁרָיִים": "and among those that remain will be those whom Jehovah calls." *Sárid* is one who is left after a judgment or a battle; hence in Jer. xlii. 17 and Josh. viii. 22 it is connected with *pálit* (one who has escaped from destruction), so that here *s'ridim* and *p'letáh* are actually alike, the *s'ridim* being just the escaped ones upon Mount Zion. Through this clause there is appended to what precedes the fresh definition, that among the saved will be found those whom the Lord calls. These may either be the believing portion of Judah, or believers from among the heathen. If we adopted the first view, the sentence would simply contain a more precise definition of the thought, that none are saved but those who call upon the name of the Lord, and therefore would preclude the possibility of including all the inhabitants of Judah among those who call upon the Lord. If we took the second view, the sentence would add this new feature to the thought contained in the first hemistich, that not only citizens of Jerusalem and Judah would be saved in the time of judgment, but all who called upon the Lord out of every nation. The latter view deserves the preference, because the expression "קָרָא בִשְׁם" did not need a more precise definition. The salvation of believers from the heathen world is implied in the first half of the verse, since it is simply connected with calling upon the name of the Lord. The Apostle Paul has quoted it in this sense in Rom. x. 13, as a proof of the participation of the heathen in the Messianic salvation.

If we proceed now to seek for the fulfilment of this prophecy, the Apostle Peter quoted the whole of these verses (28-32), with the exception of ver. 32b, after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples, on the first Whitsuntide feast of the apostolical church, as having been fulfilled by that Whitsuntide miracle (Acts ii. 17-21); and in his subsequent reference to this fulfilment in ch. ii. 39, "For the promise is

unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call," he even adds the closing words of Joel (ver. 32b).<sup>1</sup> Consequently the Christian church from time immemorial has recognised in the miracle of Pentecost the outpouring of the Spirit of God predicted in vers. 1, 2:<sup>2</sup> so that the only point upon which there has been a division of opinion has been, whether the fulfilment is to be confined to the feast of Pentecost (as nearly all the fathers and earlier Lutheran commentators suppose); or is to be sought for in certain events of Joel's own time, as well as the first feast of Pentecost (Ephr. Syr., Grot., and others); or, lastly, whether the occurrence at the first feast of Pentecost is to be regarded as simply the beginning of the fulfilment which has continued throughout the whole of the Christian era (Calov., Hengstenberg, and many others). Even the Rabbins, with the exception of *R. Mose hakkohen in Aben Ezra*, who sees only a reference to some event in Joel's own time, expect the fulfilment to take place in the future on the advent of the Messiah (Yarchi, Kimchi, Abarb.). Of the three views expressed by Christian commentators, the third is the only one that answers to the nature of the prophecy as correctly interpreted. The outpouring of the Spirit of God, or the communication of it in all its fulness to the covenant nation, without any limitation whatever, is a standing mark with the prophets of the Messianic times (compare Isa. xxxii. 15 with xi. 9 and liv. 13) or new covenant (Jer. xxxi. 33, 34; Ezek. xxxvi. 26 sqq.; Zech. xii. 10). And even if the way was opened and prepared for this by the prophetic endowment of particular members of the old

<sup>1</sup> In quoting this passage Peter follows the LXX. on the whole, even in their deviations from the original text, viz. in ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος μου instead of רִחֵם (vers. 28, 29), in the addition of μου to ἐπὶ τοὺς δούλους and δούλας (ver. 29b), in ἐπιφανῇ for מְרִיב (ver. 4), because these differences were of no consequence, so far as his object was concerned. On the other hand, he has interpreted καὶ ἔσται μετὰ ταῦτα (כֵּן הוּיָהּ אַחֲרַי כֵּן) by καὶ ἔσται ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις, and added for the same purpose, λέγει ὁ Θεός. He has also transposed the two clauses καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι . . . and καὶ οἱ νεανίσκοι, probably simply for the purpose of letting the youths follow the sons and daughters, and placing the old men in the third row; and lastly, he has added ἄνω to ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ . . . , and κάτω to ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, to give greater prominence to the antithesis.

<sup>2</sup> See Hengstenberg, *Christol.* i. pp. 345, 346, translation.

covenant, these sporadic communications of the Spirit of God in the Old Testament times cannot be regarded as the first steps in the fulfilment of our prophecy, since they were not *outpourings* of the Spirit of God. This first took place when Christ Jesus the Son of God had completed the work of redemption, *i.e.* on the first feast of Pentecost after the resurrection and ascension of Christ. Previous to this the words of John vii. 39 applied: οὐπω ἦν πνεῦμα ἄγιον, ὅτι ὁ Ἰησοῦς οὐδέπω ἐδοξάσθη. The reference in this prophecy to the founding of the new covenant, or Christian church, is also evident from the words, "And it shall come to pass afterwards," for which Peter substituted, "And it shall come to pass in the last days," interpreting אחריו כן, the use of which was occasioned by the retrospective reference to בראשית in ch. ii. 23, with perfect correctness so far as the fact was concerned, by the formula answering to באחרית הימים, *viz.* ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις, which always denotes the Messianic future, or times of the completion of the kingdom of God. And just as *achārē khēn* precludes any reference to an event in Joel's own time, so does ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις preclude any fulfilment whatever in the times before Christ. But however certain it may be that the fulfilment first took place at the first Christian feast of Pentecost, we must not stop at this one pentecostal miracle. The address of the Apostle Peter by no means requires this limitation, but rather contains distinct indications that Peter himself saw nothing more therein than the commencement of the fulfilment, "but a commencement, indeed, which embraced the ultimate fulfilment, as the germ enfolds the tree." We see this in ver. 38, where he exhorts his hearers to repent and be baptized, and adds the promise, "and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost;" and again in ver. 39, where he observes, "The promise belongs to you and to your children, and to all that are afar off (τοῖς εἰς μακράν), as many as the Lord our God will call." For if not only the children of the apostle's contemporaries, but also those that were afar off—*i.e.* not foreign Jews, but the far-off heathen—were to participate in the gift of the Holy Spirit, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit which commenced at Pentecost must continue as long as the Lord shall receive into His kingdom those who are still standing afar off, *i.e.* until the fulness of the Gentiles shall have entered the



kingdom of God. See Hengstenberg, *Christology*, i. pp. 326 sqq. transl., where further reasons are adduced for taking this to be the allusion in the prophecy.

There is far greater diversity in the opinions entertained as to the fulfilment of vers. 30-32 : some thinking of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans (Grotius, Turretius, and the Socinians); others of judgments upon the enemies of the covenant nation shortly after the return from the Babylonian exile (Ephr. Syr. and others); others, again, of the last judgment (Tertull., Theod., Crus.), or the destruction of Jerusalem and the last judgment (Chrys.). Of all these views, those which refer to events occurring before the Christian era are irreconcilable with the context, according to which the day of the Lord will come after the outpouring of the Spirit of God. Even the wonders connected with the death of Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, of which some have thought, cannot properly be taken into account, although the marvellous phenomena occurring at the death of Christ—the darkening of the sun, the shaking of the earth, and the rending of the rocks—were harbingers of the approaching judgment, and were recognised by the *ὄχλοις* as warnings to repent, and so escape from the judgment (Matt. xxvii. 45, 51; Luke xxiii. 44, 48). For the signs in heaven and earth that are mentioned in vers. 30 and 31 were to take place before the coming of the terrible day of the Lord, which would dawn after the outpouring of the Spirit of God upon all flesh, and which came, as history teaches, upon the Jewish nation that had rejected its Saviour on the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, and upon the Gentile world-power in the destruction of the Roman empire, and from that time forward breaks in constant succession upon one Gentile nation after another, until all the ungodly powers of this world shall be overthrown (cf. ch. iii. 2). On account of this internal connection between the day of Jehovah and the outpouring of the Spirit upon the church of the Lord, Peter also quoted vers. 30-32 of this prophecy, for the purpose of impressing upon the hearts of all the hearers of his address the admonition, “Save yourselves from this perverse generation” (Acts ii. 40), and also of pointing out the way of deliverance from the threatening judgment to all who were willing to be saved.

Chap. iii. (Heb. Bib. ch. iv.) JUDGMENT UPON THE WORLD OF NATIONS, AND GLORIFICATION OF ZION.—Vers. 1, 2. “*For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall turn the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather together all nations, and bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will contend with them there concerning my people and my inheritance Israel, which they have scattered among the nations, and my land have they divided.*” Ver. 3. *And for my people they cast the lot; and gave the boy for a harlot, and the maiden they have sold for wine, and drunk (it).”* The description of the judgment-day predicted in ch. ii. 31 commences with an explanatory וְ. The train of thought is the following: When the day of the Lord comes, there will be deliverance upon Zion only for those who call upon the name of the Lord; for then will all the heathen nations that have displayed hostility to Jehovah’s inheritance be judged in the valley of Jehoshaphat. By *hinnēh*, the fact to be announced is held up as something new and important. The notice as to the time points back to the “afterward” in ii. 28: “in those days,” viz. the days of the outpouring of the Spirit of God. This time is still further described by the apposition, “at that time, when I shall turn the captivity of Judah,” as the time of the redemption of the people of God out of their prostrate condition, and out of every kind of distress. שׁוּבֵי אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל is not used here in the sense of “to bring back the prisoners,” but, as in Hos. vi. 11, in the more comprehensive sense of *restitutio in integrum*, which does indeed include the gathering together of those who were dispersed, and the return of the captives, as one element, though it is not exhausted by this one element, but also embraces their elevation into a new and higher state of glory, transcending their earlier state of grace. In וְיִשְׁפָּטֵם the prediction of judgment is appended to the previous definition of the time in the form of an apodosis. The article in כָּל-הַגּוֹיִם (all the nations) does not refer to “all those nations which were spoken of in ch. i. and ii. under the figure of the locusts” (Hengstenberg), but is used because the prophet had in his mind all those nations upon which hostility towards Israel, the people of God, is charged immediately afterwards as a crime: so that the article is used in much the same manner as in Jer. xlix. 36, because the notion, though in itself an indefinite one, is more fully defined in what follows (cf. Ewald,

§ 277, a). The valley of *Y'hōshāphāt*, i.e. Jehovah judges, is not the valley in which the judgment upon several heathen nations took place under Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. xx.), and which received the name of *Valley of blessing*, from the feast of thanksgiving which Jehoshaphat held there (2 Chron. xx. 22-26), as Ab. Ezra, Hofmann, Ewald, and others suppose; for the "Valley of blessing" was not "the valley of Kidron, which was selected for that festival in the road back from the desert of Tekoah to Jerusalem" (see Bertheau on 2 Chron. l.c.), and still less "the plain of Jezreel" (Kliefoth), but was situated in the neighbourhood of the ruins of *Bereikūt*, which have been discovered by Wolcott (see Ritter, *Erdkunde*, xv. p. 635, and Van de Velde, *Mem.* p. 292). On the other hand, the valley of Jehoshaphat is unquestionably to be sought for, according to this chapter (as compared with Zech. xiv. 4), in or near Jerusalem; and the name, which does not occur anywhere else in either the Old or New Testament, excepting here and in ver. 12, is formed by Joel, like the name *'ēmeq hechārūts* in ver. 14, from the judgment which Jehovah would hold upon the nations there. The tradition of the church (see Euseb. and Jerome in the *Onom. s.v. κοιλάς*, *Cælas*, and *Itiner. Anton.* p. 594; cf. Robinson, *Pal.* i. pp. 396, 397) has correctly assigned it to the valley of the Kidron, on the eastern side of Jerusalem, or rather to the northern part of that valley (2 Sam. xviii. 18), or valley of *Shaveh* (Gen. xiv. 17). There would the Lord contend with the nations, hold judgment upon them, because they had attacked His people (*nachālāthī*, the people of Jehovah, as in ch. ii. 17) and His kingdom (*'artsī*). The dispersion of Israel among the nations, and the division (*pār*) of the Lord's land, cannot, of course, refer to the invasion of Judah by the Philistines and Arabians in the time of Joram (2 Chron. xxi. 16, 17). For although these foes did actually conquer Jerusalem and plunder it, and carried off, among other captives, even the sons of the king himself, this transportation of a number of prisoners cannot be called a dispersion of the people of Israel among the heathen; still less can the plundering of the land and capital be called a division of the land of Jehovah; to say nothing of the fact, that the reference here is to the judgment which would come upon all nations after the outpouring of the Spirit of God upon all flesh, and that it is not till vers. 4-8 that Joel proceeds

to speak of the calamities which neighbouring nations had inflicted upon the kingdom of Judah. The words presuppose as facts that have already occurred, both the dispersion of the whole nation of Israel in exile among the heathen, and the conquest and capture of the whole land by heathen nations, and that in the extent to which they took place under the Chaldeans and Romans alone. In vers. 2 and 3 Joel is speaking not of events belonging to his own time, or to the most recent past, but of that dispersion of the whole of the ancient covenant nation among the heathen, which was only completely effected on the conquest of Palestine and destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, and which continues to this day; though we cannot agree with Hengstenberg, that this furnishes an argument in favour of the allegorical interpretation of the army of locusts in ch. i. and ii. For since Moses had already foretold that Israel would one day be driven out among the heathen (Lev. xxvi. 33 sqq.; Deut. xxviii. 36 sqq.), Joel might assume that this judgment was a truth well known in Israel, even though he had not expressed it in his threatening of punishment in ch. i. and ii. Ver. 3 depicts the ignominious treatment of Israel in connection with this catastrophe. The prisoners of war are distributed by lot among the conquerors, and disposed of by them to slave-dealers at most ridiculous prices,—a boy for a harlot, a girl for a drink of wine. Even in Joel's time, many Israelites may no doubt have been scattered about in distant heathen lands (cf. ver. 5); but the heathen nations had not yet cast lots upon the nation as a whole, to dispose of the inhabitants as slaves, and divide the land among themselves. This was not done till the time of the Romans.<sup>1</sup> But, as many of the

<sup>1</sup> After the conquest and destruction of Jerusalem, Titus disposed of the prisoners, whose number reached 97,000 in the course of the war, in the following manner: Those under seventeen years of age were publicly sold; of the remainder, some were executed immediately, some sent away to work in the Egyptian mines, some kept for the public shows to fight with wild beasts in all the chief cities of Rome; and only the tallest and most handsome for the triumphal procession in Rome (compare Josephus, *de bell. Jud.* vi. 9, 2, 3). And the Jews who were taken prisoners in the Jewish war in the time of Hadrian, are said to have been sold in the slave-market at Hebron at so low a price, that four Jews were disposed of for a measure of barley. Even in the contests of the Ptolemæans and Seleucidæ for the possession of Palestine, thousands of Jews were sold as prisoners of

earlier commentators have clearly seen, we must not stop even at this. The people and inheritance of Jehovah are not merely the Old Testament Israel as such, but the church of the Lord of both the old and new covenants, upon which the Spirit of God is poured out; and the judgment which Jehovah will hold upon the nations, on account of the injuries inflicted upon His people, is the last general judgment upon the nations, which will embrace not merely the heathen Romans and other heathen nations by whom the Jews have been oppressed, but all the enemies of the people of God, both within and without the earthly limits of the church of the Lord, including even carnally-minded Jews, Mohammedans, and nominal Christians, who are heathens in heart.<sup>1</sup>

Before depicting the final judgment upon the hostile nations of the world, Joel notices in vers. 4-8 the hostility which the nations round about Judah had manifested towards it in his own day, and foretels to these a righteous retribution for the crimes they had committed against the covenant nation. Ver. 4. *"And ye also, what would ye with me, O Tyre and Sidon, and all ye coasts of Philistia? will ye repay a doing to me, or do anything to me? Quickly, hastily will I turn back your doing upon your head."* Ver. 5. *"That ye have taken my silver and my gold, and have brought my best jewels into your temples."* Ver. 6. *"And the sons of Judah and the sons of Jerusalem ye have sold to the sons of Javan, to remove them far from their border."* Ver. 7. *"Behold, I waken them from the place whither ye have sold them, and turn back your doing upon your head."*

war. Thus, for example, the Syrian commander Nicanor, in his expedition against the Jews in the Maccabæan war, sold by anticipation, in the commercial towns along the Mediterranean, such Jews as should be made prisoners, at the rate of ninety prisoners for one talent; whereupon 1000 slave-dealers accompanied the Syrian army, and carried fetters with them for the prisoners (1 Macc. iii. 41; 2 Macc. viii. 11, 25; Jos. Ant. xii. 7, 3).

<sup>1</sup> As J. Marck correctly observes, after mentioning the neighbouring nations that were hostile to Judah, and then the Syrians and Romans: "We might proceed in the same way to all the enemies of the Christian church, from its very cradle to the end of time, such as carnal Jews, Gentile Romans, cruel Mohammedans, impious Papists, and any others who either have borne or yet will bear the punishment of their iniquity, according to the rule and measure of the restitution of the church, down to those enemies who shall yet remain at the coming of Christ, and be overthrown at the complete and final redemption of His church."

Ver. 8. *And sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of Javan, and they sell them to the Sabæans, to a people far off; for Jehovah has spoken it.*" By *v'gam* the Philistines and Phœnicians are added to the *gōyim* already mentioned, as being no less culpable than they; not, however, in the sense of, "and also if one would inquire more thoroughly into the fact" (Ewald), or, "and even so far as ye are concerned, who, in the place of the friendship and help which ye were bound to render as neighbours, have oppressed my people" (Rosenmüller), for such additions as these are foreign to the context; but rather in this sense, "and yea also . . . do not imagine that ye can do wrong with impunity, as though ye had a right so to do." *לֹא מִה-אֲתָם לִי* does not mean, "What have I to do with you?" for this would be expressed differently (compare Josh. xxii. 24; Judg. xi. 12); but, "What would ye with me?" The question is unfinished, because of its emotional character, and is resumed and completed immediately afterwards in a disjunctive form (Hitzig). Tyre and Sidon, the two chief cities of the Phœnicians (see at Josh. xix. 29 and xi. 8), represent all the Phœnicians. *כָּל הַגִּלּוֹת פִּלְשְׁתִּים*, "all the circles or districts of the Philistines," are the five small princedoms of Philistia (see at Josh. xiii. 2). *נַמַּל*, the doing, or inflicting (*sc.* of evil), from *gāmal*, to accomplish, to do (see at Isa. iii. 9). The disjunctive question, "Will ye perhaps repay to me a deed, *i.e.* a wrong, that I have done to you, or of your own accord attempt anything against me?" has a negative meaning: "Ye have neither cause to avenge yourselves upon me, *i.e.* upon my people Israel, nor any occasion to do it harm. But if repayment is the thing in hand, I will, and that very speedily (*gal m'hērāh*, see Isa. v. 26), bring back your doing upon your own head" (cf. Ps. vii. 17). To explain what is here said, an account is given in vers. 5, 6 of what they have done to the Lord and His people, —namely, taken away their gold and silver, and brought their costly treasures into their palaces or temples. These words are not to be restricted to the plundering of the temple and its treasury, but embrace the plundering of palaces and of the houses of the rich, which always followed the conquest of towns (cf. 1 Kings xiv. 26; 2 Kings xiv. 14). *הַיְכָלֵיהֶם* also are not temples only, but palaces as well (cf. Isa. xiii. 22; Amos viii. 3; Prov. xxx. 28). Joel had no doubt the plunder-

ing of Judah and Jerusalem by the Philistines and Arabians in the time of Jehoram in his mind (see 2 Chron. xxi. 17). The share of the Phœnicians in this crime was confined to the fact, that they had purchased from the Philistines the Judæans who had been taken prisoners by them, and sold them again as slaves to the sons of Javan, *i.e.* to the Ionians or Greeks of Asia Minor.<sup>1</sup> The clause, "that ye might remove them far from their border," whence there would be no possibility of their returning to their native land, serves to bring out the magnitude of the crime. This would be repaid to them according to the true *lex talionis* (vers. 7, 8). The Lord would raise up the members of His own nation from the place to which they had been sold, *i.e.* would bring them back again into their own land, and deliver up the Philistines and Phœnicians into the power of the Judæans (*mākhar b'yād* as in Judg. ii. 14, iii. 8, etc.), who would then sell their prisoners as slaves to the remote people of the Sabæans, a celebrated trading people in Arabia Felix (see at 1 Kings x. 1). This threat would certainly be fulfilled, for Jehovah had spoken it (cf. Isa. i. 20). This occurred partly on the defeat of the Philistines by Uzziah (2 Chron. xxvi. 6, 7) and Hezekiah (2 Kings xviii. 8), where Philistian prisoners of war were certainly sold as slaves; but principally after the captivity, when Alexander the Great and his successors set many of the Jewish prisoners of war in their lands at liberty (compare the promise of King Demetrius to Jonathan, "I will send away in freedom such of the Judæans as have been made prisoners, and reduced to slavery in our land," Josephus, *Ant.* xiii. 2, 3), and portions of the Philistian and Phœnician lands were for a time under Jewish sway; when Jonathan besieged Ashkelon and Gaza (1 Macc. x. 86, xi. 60); when King Alexander (Balas) ceded Ekron and the district of Judah (1 Macc. x. 89); when the Jewish king Alexander Jannæus conquered Gaza, and destroyed it (Josephus, *Ant.* xiii. 13, 3; *bell. Jud.* i. 4, 2); and when, subsequent to the cession of Tyre, which had been conquered by Alexander the Great, to the Seleucidæ, Antiochus the younger appointed Simon commander-in-chief from the Ladder of Tyre to the border of Egypt (1 Macc. xi. 59).

<sup>1</sup> On the widespread slave-trade of the Phœnicians, see Movers, *Phœnizier*, ii. 3, p. 70 sqq.

Vers. 9-17. Fulfilment of the judgment upon all the heathen predicted in ver. 2. Compare the similar prediction of judgment in Zech. xiv. 2 sqq. The call is addressed to all nations to equip themselves for battle, and march into the valley of Jehoshaphat to war against the people of God, but in reality to be judged by the Lord through His heavenly heroes, whom He sends down thither. Ver. 9. *"Proclaim ye this among the nations; sanctify a war, awaken the heroes, let all the men of war draw near and come up!"* Ver. 10. *"Forge your coulters into swords, and your vine-sickles into spears: let the weak one say, A hero am I."* Ver. 11. *"Hasten and come, all ye nations round about, and assemble yourselves! Let thy heroes come down thither, O Jehovah!"* Ver. 12. *"The nations are to rise up, and come into the valley of Jehoshaphat; for there shall I sit to judge all the heathen round about."* The summons to prepare for war (ver. 9) is addressed, not to the worshippers of Jehovah or the Israelites scattered among the heathen (Cyr., Calv., Umbreit), but to the heathen nations, though not directly to the heroes and warriors among the heathen, but to heralds, who are to listen to the divine message, and convey it to the heathen nations. This change belongs to the poetical drapery of the thought, that at a sign from the Lord the heathen nations are to assemble together for war against Israel. קָרָא מִלְחָמָה does not mean "to declare war" (Hitzig), but to consecrate a war, i.e. to prepare for war by sacrifices and religious rites of consecration (cf. 1 Sam. vii. 8, 9; Jer. vi. 4). הָעִירִי: waken up or arouse (not wake up) the heroes from their peaceful rest to battle. With וְנִשִּׂי the address passes over from the second person to the third, which Hitzig accounts for on the ground that the words state what the heralds are to say to the nations or heroes; but the continuance of the imperative *kōttū* in ver. 10 does not suit this. This transition is a very frequent one (cf. Isa. xli. 1, xxxiv. 1), and may be very simply explained from the lively nature of the description. וְנִלָּחֶם is here applied to the advance of hostile armies against a land or city. The nations are to summon up all their resources and all their strength for this war, because it will be a decisive one. They are to forge the tools of peaceful agriculture into weapons of war (compare Isa. ii. 4 and Mic. iv. 3, where the Messianic times of peace are depicted as the turning of weapons of war



into instruments of agriculture). Even the weak one is to rouse himself up to be a hero, "as is generally the case when a whole nation is seized with warlike enthusiasm" (Hitzig). This enthusiasm is expressed still further in the appeal in ver. 11 to assemble together as speedily as possible. The *ἀπ. λεγ. ἔγ* is related to *עָזַר*, to hasten; whereas no support can be found in the language to the meaning "assemble," adopted by the LXX., Targ., etc. The expression *בְּלִי-הַנְּחִים* by no means necessitates our taking these words as a summons or challenge on the part of Joel to the heathen, as Hitzig does; for this can be very well interpreted as a summons, with which the nations call one another to battle, as the following *וְיִקְרְבוּ* requires; and the assumption of Hitzig, Ewald, and others, that this form is the imperative for *הִקְרְבוּ*, cannot be sustained from Isa. xliii. 9 and Jer. l. 5. It is not till ver. 11b that Joel steps in with a prayer addressed to the Lord, that He will send down His heavenly heroes to the place to which the heathen are flowing together. *Hanchath* an *imper. hiph.*, with *pathach* instead of *tzere*, on account of the guttural, from *nāchath*, to come down. The heroes of Jehovah are heavenly hosts, or angels, who execute His commands as *gibbōrē khōāch* (Ps. ciii. 20, cf. lxxviii. 25). This prayer is answered thus by Jehovah in ver. 12: "Let the nations rise up, and come into the valley of Jehoshaphat, for there will He hold judgment upon them." *וְעָרֵי* corresponds to *הָעִירִי* in ver. 9; and at the close, "all the heathen round about" is deliberately repeated. Still there is no antithesis in this to "all nations" in ver. 2, as though here the judgment was simply to come upon the hostile nations in the neighbourhood of Judah, and not upon all the heathen universally (Hitzig). For even in ver. 2 *כָּל הַגּוֹיִם* are simply all the heathen who have attacked the people of Jehovah—that is to say, all the nations round about Israel. Only these are not merely the neighbouring nations to Judah, but all heathen nations who have come into contact with the kingdom of God, *i.e.* all the nations of the earth without exception, inasmuch as before the last judgment the gospel of the kingdom is to be preached in all the world for a testimony to all nations (Matt. xxiv. 14; Mark xiii. 10).

It is to the last decisive judgment, in which all the single judgments find their end, that the command of Jehovah to

His strong heroes refers. Ver. 13. "*Put ye in the sickle; for the harvest is ripe: come, tread, for the wine-press is full, the vats overflow: for their wickedness is great.*" The judgment is represented under the double figure of the reaping of the fields and the treading out of the grapes in the wine-press. The angels are first of all summoned to reap the ripe corn (Isa. xvii. 5; Rev. xiv. 16), and then commanded to tread the wine-presses that are filled with grapes. The opposite opinion expressed by Hitzig, viz. that the command to tread the wine-presses is preceded by the command to cut off the grapes, is supported partly by the erroneous assertion, that *bāshal* is not applied to the ripening of corn, and partly upon the arbitrary assumption that *qātsir*, a harvest, stands for *bātsir*, a vintage; and *maggāl*, a sickle (cf. Jer. l. 16), for *mazmērāh*, a vine-dresser's bill. But *bāshal* does not mean "to boil," either primarily or literally, but to be done, or to be ripe, like the Greek *πέσσω*, *πέπτω*, to ripen, to make soft, to boil (see at Ex. xii. 9), and hence in the *piel* both to boil and roast, and in the *hiphil* to make ripe or ripen (Gen. xl. 10), applied both to grapes and corn. It is impossible to infer from the fact that Isaiah (xvi. 9) uses the word *qātsir* for the vintage, on account of the alliteration with *qayits*, that this is also the meaning of the word in Joel. But we have a decisive proof in the resumption of this passage in Rev. xiv. 15 and 18, where the two figures (of the corn-harvest and the gathering of the grapes) are kept quite distinct, and the clause *בְּשֶׁל קִצִּיר* is paraphrased and explained thus: "The time is come for thee to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe." The ripeness of the corn is a figurative representation of ripeness for judgment. Just as in the harvest—namely, at the threshing and winnowing connected with the harvest—the grains of corn are separated from the husk, the wheat being gathered into the barns, the husk blown away by the wind, and the straw burned; so will the good be separated from the wicked by the judgment, the former being gathered into the kingdom of God for the enjoyment of eternal life,—the latter, on the other hand, being given up to eternal death. The harvest field is the earth (*ἡ γῆ*, Rev. xiv. 16), i.e. the inhabitants of the earth, the human race. The ripening began at the time of the appearance of Christ upon the earth (John iv. 35; Matt. ix. 38). With the preaching of the gospel among all

nations, the judgment of separation and decision (ἡ κρίσις, John iii. 18-21) commenced; with the spread of the kingdom of Christ in the earth it passes over all nations; and it will be completed in the last judgment, on the return of Christ in glory at the end of this world. Joel does not carry out the figure of the harvest any further, but simply presents the judgment under the similar figure of the treading of the grapes that have been gathered. ירד, not from *yārad*, to descend, but from *rādāh*, to trample under foot, tread the press that is filled with grapes. הַשִּׁיקוּ הַיְקָבִים is used in ch. ii. 24 to denote the most abundant harvest; here it is figuratively employed to denote the great mass of men who are ripe for the judgment, as the explanatory clause, for "their wicked (deed) is much," or "their wickedness is great," which recalls Gen. vi. 5, clearly shows. The treading of the wine-press does not express the idea of wading in blood, or the execution of a great massacre; but in Isa. lxiii. 3, as well as in Rev. xiv. 20, it is a figure denoting an annihilating judgment upon the enemies of God and of His kingdom. The wine-press is "the wine-press of the wrath of God," i.e. "what the wine-press is to ordinary grapes, the wrath of God is to the grapes referred to here" (Hengstenberg on Rev. xiv. 19).

The execution of this divine command is not expressly mentioned, but in ver. 14 sqq. the judgment is simply depicted thus: first of all we have a description of the streaming of the nations into the valley of judgment, and then of the appearance of Jehovah upon Zion in the terrible glory of the Judge of the world, and as the refuge of His people. Ver. 14. "*Tumult, tumult in the valley of decision: for the day of Jehovah is near in the valley of decision.*" *Hāmōnīm* are noisy crowds, whom the prophet sees in the Spirit pouring into the valley of Jehoshaphat. The repetition of the word is expressive of the great multitude, as in 2 Kings iii. 16. עֵמֶק הַתְּהַרֵּץ, not valley of threshing; for though *chārūts* is used in Isa. xxviii. 27 and xli. 15 for the threshing-sledge, it is not used for the threshing itself, but valley of the deciding judgment, from *chārats*, to decide, to determine irrevocably (Isa. x. 22; 1 Kings xx. 40), so that *chārūts* simply defines the name *Jehoshaphat* with greater precision. בֵּי קְרוֹב (compare ch. i. 15, ii. 1) is used here to denote the im-

mediate proximity of the judgment, which bursts at once, according to ver. 15.

Ver. 15. *"Sun and moon have become black, and the stars have withdrawn their shining. Ver. 16. And Jehovah roars out of Zion, and He thunders out of Jerusalem; and heaven and earth quake: but Jehovah is a refuge to His people, and a stronghold to the sons of Israel. Ver. 17. And ye will perceive that I Jehovah am your God, dwelling upon Zion, my holy mountain: and Jerusalem will be a sanctuary, and strangers will not pass through it any more."* On the forebodings of the judgment in ver. 15, see at ch. ii. 10. Out of Zion, the place of His throne, will Jehovah cause His thunder-voice to sound, will roar like a lion which is rushing upon its prey (Hos. v. 14; Amos iii. 4), so that heaven and earth tremble in consequence. But it is only to His enemies that He is terrible; to His people, the true Israel, He is a refuge and strong tower. From the fact that He only destroys His enemies, and protects His own people, the latter will learn that He is their God, and dwells upon Zion in His sanctuary, *i.e.* that He there completes His kingdom, that He purifies Jerusalem of all foes, all the ungodly through the medium of the judgment, and makes it a holy place which cannot be trodden any more by strangers, by Gentiles, or by the unclean of either Gentiles or Israelites (Isa. xxxv. 8), but will be inhabited only by the righteous (Isa. lx. 21; Zech. xiv. 21), who, as Rev. xxi. 27 affirms, are written in the Lamb's book of life. For Zion or Jerusalem is of course not the Jerusalem of the earthly Palestine, but the sanctified and glorified city of the living God, in which the Lord will be eternally united with His redeemed, sanctified, and glorified church. We are forbidden to think of the earthly Jerusalem or the earthly Mount Zion, not only by the circumstance that the gathering of all the heathen nations takes place in the valley of Jehoshaphat, *i.e.* in a portion of the valley of the Kidron, which is a pure impossibility, but also by the description which follows of the glorification of Judah.

Vers. 18-21. After the judgment upon all nations, the land of the Lord will overflow with streams of divine blessing; but the seat of the world-power will become a barren waste. Ver. 18. *"And it comes to pass in that day, the mountains will trickle down with new wine, and the hills flow with milk, and all the*


*brooks of Judah flow with water; and a fountain will issue from the house of Jehovah, and water the Acacia valley. Ver. 19. Egypt will become a desolation, and Edom a barren waste, for the sin upon the sons of Judah, that they have shed innocent blood in their land. Ver. 20. But Judah, it will dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation. Ver. 21. And I shall expiate their blood that I have not expiated: and Jehovah dwelleth upon Zion."* The end of the ways of the Lord is eternal blessing for His people, whilst the enemies of His kingdom fall victims to the curse. This thought is expressed in figures taken from the state of the covenant land of the Old Testament, and those of the bordering kingdoms of Egypt and Edom which were hostile to Israel. If we bear this in mind, we shall not fall into Volck's error, of seeking in this description for a clear statement as to the transfiguration of the land of Israel during the thousand years' reign, whilst the rest of the earth is not yet glorified; for it is evident from ver. 18, as compared with the parallel passages, viz. Zech. xiv. 6 sqq. and Ezek. xlvii. 1-12, that this passage does not teach the earthly glorification of Palestine, and desolation of Egypt and Idumæa, but that Judah and Jerusalem are types of the kingdom of God, whilst Egypt and Edom are types of the world-powers that are at enmity against God; in other words, that this description is not to be understood literally, but spiritually. "In that day," viz. the period following the final judgment upon the heathen, the mountains and hills of Judah, i.e. the least fruitful portions of the Old Testament kingdom of God in the time of the prophet, will overflow with new wine and milk, and all the brooks of water be filled, i.e. no more dry up in the hot season of the year (ch. i. 20). Thus will the fruitfulness of Canaan, the land of the Lord, flowing with milk and honey, come forth in all its potency. Even the unfruitful acacia valley will be watered by a spring issuing from the house of Jehovah, and turned into a fruitful land. The valley of *Shittim* is the barren valley of the Jordan, above the Dead Sea. The name *Shittim*, acacia, is taken from the last encampment of the Israelites in the steppes of Moab, before their entrance into Canaan (Num. xxv. 1; Josh. iii. 1), and was chosen by the prophet to denote a very dry valley, as the acacia grows in a dry soil (cf. Celsii, *Hierob.* i. p. 500 sqq.). The spring which waters this valley,

and proceeds from the house of Jehovah, and the living water that flows from Jerusalem, according to Zech. xiv. 8, are of course not earthly streams that are constantly flowing, as distinguished from the streams caused by rain and snow, which very soon dry up again, but spiritual waters of life (John iv. 10, 14, vii. 38); and, in fact, as a comparison of Ezek. xlvii. 7-12 with Rev. xxii. 1, 2 clearly shows, the "river of the water of life, clear as a crystal," which in the New Jerusalem coming down from God upon the earth (Rev. xxi. 10) proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, and on both sides of which there grows the tree of life, that bears its fruit twelve times a-year, or every month, and the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations. The partially verbal agreement between the description of this river of water in Rev. xxii. 2, and that in Ezek. xlvii. 12, overthrows the millenarian view, that the glorification of Judah and Jerusalem, predicted by Joel, Zechariah, and Ezekiel, will be a partial glorification of the earth, viz. of the Holy Land, which takes place before the creation of the new heaven and the new earth.—Ver. 19. On the other hand, the curse of desolation will fall upon Egypt and Edom, on account of the sin which they have committed upon the sons of Judah. אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ, with the genitive of the object, as in Ob. 10, Hab. ii. 8, 17, etc. This sin is then more precisely defined, as consisting in the fact that they had shed innocent blood of the sons of Judah, *i.e.* of the people of God, in their land (*artsâm*, the land of the Egyptians and Edomites, not of the Judæans): that is to say, in the Egypt in the olden time, more especially by the command to slay all the Hebrew boys (Ex. i. 16), and in the Edom of more recent times, probably when throwing off the dominion of Judah (see at Amos i. 11 and Ob. 10). These nations and lands had both thereby become types of the power of the world in its hostility to God, in which capacity they are mentioned here, and Edom again in Isa. xxxiv. and lxiii.; cf. Jer. xlix. 7 sqq. and Ezek. xxxv.—Ver. 20. On the other hand, Judah and Jerusalem shall dwell for ever,—a poetical expression for "be inhabited," both land and city being personified, as in Isa. xlii. 20, etc. Thus will Jehovah, by means of the final judgment upon the heathen, wipe away the blood-guiltiness that they have contracted in their treatment of His people, and manifest Himself as King of Zion. With these

thoughts the prophecy of Joel closes (ver. 21). The verb *niqqáh*, to cleanse, with *dām*, to wipe away or expunge blood-guiltiness by punishment, is chosen with reference to נָקִיָּה in ver. 19; and נָקִיָּה, which follows, is to be taken in a relative sense: so that there is no need to alter נָקִיָּה into נִקְמָה (Ges.); and the latter has no critical support in the Septuagint rendering *καὶ ἐκζητήσω*, which merely reproduces the sense.—Ver. 21*a* does not contain the announcement of a still further punishment upon Egypt and Edom, but simply the thought with which the proclamation of the judgment closes,—namely, that the eternal desolation of the world-kingsdoms mentioned here will wipe out all the wrong which they have done to the people of God, and which has hitherto remained unpunished. But Zion will rejoice in the eternal reign of its God. Jehovah dwells upon Zion, when He manifests Himself to all the world as the King of His people, on the one hand by the annihilation of His foes, and on the other hand by the perfecting of His kingdom in glory.

# AMOS.

## INTRODUCTION.

1.  **THE PROPHET.**—*Amos* (אִמּוֹשׁ, *i.e.* Bearer or Burden), according to the heading to his book, was “among the shepherds (*nōq’dīm*) of Tekoah” when the Lord called him to be a prophet; that is to say, he was a native of Tekoah, a town situated on the borders of the desert of Judah, two hours to the south of Bethlehem, the ruins of which have been preserved under the ancient name (see at Josh. xv. 59, LXX.), and lived with the shepherds who fed their sheep in the steppe to the east of Tekoah; of course not as a rich owner of flocks, but simply as a shepherd. For even though *nōqēd* is applied to the Moabitish king in 2 Kings iii. 4 as a rich owner of a choice breed of sheep and goats, the word properly signifies only a rearer of sheep, *i.e.* not merely the owner, but the shepherd of choice sheep, as Bochart (*Hieroz.* i. p. 483, ed. Ros.) has proved from the Arabic. But Amos himself affirms, in ch. vii. 14, that he was a simple shepherd. He there replies to the priest at Bethel, who wanted to prevent him from prophesying in the kingdom of Israel: “I am not a prophet, nor yet a prophet’s pupil, but a herdman (*bōqēd*) am I, and *bōlēš shiqmīm*, a gatherer of sycamores” (see at ch. vii. 14),—*i.e.* one who fed upon this fruit, which resembles figs, and is described by Pliny (*Hist. n.* 13, 14) as *prædulcis*, but which, according to Strabo, xvii. 823 (ἄτιμος κατὰ τὴν γεύσιν), was very lightly esteemed as food, and also, according to Dioscor., was ἄτιμος καὶ κακοστόμαχος, and which is only used in Egypt as the food of the common people (Norden, *Reise*, p. 118). Consequently we have to regard Amos as a shepherd living in indigent circumstances, not as a prosperous man possessing both a flock of sheep and a sycamore plantation, which many commentators, following the Chaldee



and the Rabbins, have made him out to be. Without having dedicated himself to the calling of a prophet, and without even being trained in the schools of the prophets, he was called by the Lord away from the flock to be a prophet, to prophesy concerning Israel (ch. vii. 14, 15), under the Judæan king Uzziah and the Israelitish king Jeroboam II., *i.e.* within the twenty-six years of the contemporaneous rule of these two kings, or between 810 and 783 B.C. Amos therefore commenced his prophetic labours about the same time as Hosea, probably a few years earlier, and prophesied in Bethel, the chief seat of the Israelitish image-worship (ch. vii. 10). We cannot fix with any greater exactness either the time of his appearing or the duration of his ministry; for the notice in ch. i. 1, "two years before the earthquake," furnishes no chronological datum, because the time of the earthquake is unknown. It is never mentioned in the historical books of the Old Testament, though it can hardly be any other than the terrible earthquake in the time of Uzziah, which the people had not forgotten even after the captivity, inasmuch as Zechariah was able to recal the flight that took place on that occasion (Zech. xiv. 5). As Amos has not given the date of the earthquake, his evident intention was not to fix the time when his ministry commenced, or when his book was composed, but simply to point to the internal connection between this event and his own prophetic mission. According to the teaching of Scripture, the earth quakes when the Lord comes to judgment upon the nations (see at ch. viii. 8). The earthquake which shook Jerusalem two years after the appearance of Amos as prophet, was a harbinger of the judgment threatened by Him against the two kingdoms of Israel and the surrounding nations,—a practical declaration on the part of God that He would verify the word of His servant; and the allusion to this divine sign on the part of the prophet was an admonition to Israel to lay to heart the word of the Lord which he had announced to them. So far as the explanation and importance of his prophecies were concerned, it was enough to mention the kings of Judah and Israel in whose reigns he prophesied.

Under these kings the two kingdoms stood at the summit of their prosperity. Uzziah had completely subdued the Edomites, had subjugated the Philistines, and had even made the

Ammonites tributary. He had also fortified Jerusalem strongly, and had raised a powerful army; so that his name reached as far as Egypt (2 Chron. xxvi.). And Jeroboam had completely overcome the Syrians, and restored the original borders of the kingdom from the country of Hamath to the Dead Sea (2 Kings xiv. 25-28). After the power of the Syrians had been broken, Israel had no longer any foe to fear, for Assyria had not yet arisen as a conquering power. The supposition that Calneh or Ctesiphon is represented in ch. vi. 2 as having already been taken (by the Assyrians), rests upon an incorrect interpretation, and is just as erroneous as the inference, also drawn from the same passage, that Hamath was conquered and Gath destroyed. Amos does not mention the Assyrians at all; although in ch. i. 5 he threatens the Syrians with transportation to Kir, and in ch. v. 27 predicts that the Israelites will be carried into captivity beyond Damascus. In the existing state of things, the idea of the approaching fall or destruction of the kingdom of Israel was, according to human judgment, a very improbable one indeed. The inhabitants of Samaria and Zion felt themselves perfectly secure in the consciousness of their might (ch. vi. 1). The rulers of the kingdom trusted in the strength of their military resources (ch. vi. 13), and were only concerned to increase their wealth by oppressing the poor, and to revel in earthly luxuries and pleasures (ch. ii. 6-8, v. 11, 12, vi. 4-6); so that the prophet denounces woes upon those who are in security upon Zion and without care upon the mountain of Samaria (ch. vi. 1), and utters the threat that the Lord will cause the sun to set at noon, and bring darkness over the land in broad daylight (ch. viii. 9).

It was at such a time as this that the plain shepherd of Tekoah was sent to Bethel, into the kingdom of the ten tribes, to announce to the careless sinners the approach of the divine judgment, and the destruction of the kingdom. And whilst it was in itself a strange event for a prophet to be sent out of Judah into the kingdom of the ten tribes,—so strange, in fact, that in all probability it had never occurred since the kingdom had been founded, or at any rate, that no second instance of the kind is recorded, from the time when the man of God was sent out of Judah to Bethel in the reign of Jeroboam I. (1 Kings xiii.), down to the time of Amos himself,—it must have attracted

universal attention, for a man to rise up who belonged to the rank of a shepherd, who had had no training at all for a prophet's vocation, but who nevertheless proved, by the demonstration of the Spirit, that he was a prophet indeed, and who foretold, in the strength of God, what destruction awaited the covenant people, before there was the slightest human probability of any such catastrophe.

The prophet's style of composition does indeed betray the former shepherd in the use of certain words, which evidently belonged to the dialect of the common people,—e.g. מַעֲיִק for מַעֲיִץ (ch. ii. 13), בּוֹשֵׁם for בּוֹשֵׁם (ch. v. 11), מִתְעַב for מִתְעַב (ch. vi. 8), מִסְרָה for מִסְרָה (ch. vi. 10), יִצְחָק for יִצְחָק (ch. vii. 9, 16), נִשְׁקָה for נִשְׁקָה (ch. viii. 8), and in many figures and similes drawn from nature and rural life; but for the rest, it indicates a close acquaintance on the part of the prophet with the Mosaic law and the history of his nation, and also considerable rhetorical power, wealth and depth of thought, vivacity and vigour, more especially in the use of bold antitheses, and a truly poetical roll, which rises by no means unfrequently into actual rhythm; so that Lowth has already expressed the following opinion concerning him (*De poeti sacr.* ed. Mich. p. 433): "*Æquus iudex, de re non de homine quæsiturus, censebit, credo, pastorem nostrum μηδὲν ὑστερηκέναι τῶν ὑπερλίαν προφητῶν, ut sensuum elatione et magnificentia spiritus prope summis parem, ita etiam dictionis splendore et compositionis elegantia viæ quoquam inferiorem.*" Beyond these facts, which we gather from the prophet's own writings, nothing further is known of the circumstances connected with his life. After fulfilling his mission, he probably returned to Judah, his native land, where his prophecies were most likely first committed to writing. The apocryphal accounts of his death, in Pseud.-Epiphanius, c. 12, and Pseudo-Doroth. (see Carpzov, p. 319), have no historical value whatever.

2. THE BOOK.—Although Amos was sent by the Lord to Bethel, to prophesy to the people of Israel there, he does not restrict himself in his prophecy to the kingdom of the ten tribes, but, like his younger contemporary Hosea, notices the kingdom of Judah as well, and even the surrounding nations, that were hostile to the covenant nation. His book is not a mere col-

lection of the addresses delivered in Bethel, but a carefully planned, complete work, in which Amos, after the occurrence of the earthquake in the time of Uzziah, gathered together all the essential contents of the prophecies he had previously uttered at Bethel. It consists of a lengthy introduction (ch. i. ii.) and two parts, viz. simple prophetic addresses (ch. iv.-vi.), and visions with short explanations (ch. vii.-xix.). In the introduction the prophet proclaims, in the following manner, the judgment about to fall upon Damascus, Philistia, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, Moab, Judah, and Israel. The storm of the Lord, which bursts upon all these kingdoms, remains suspended over the kingdom of Israel, which is mentioned last. This is evident from the fact, that the sin of Israel is depicted more fully than that of the other nations; and the threatening of judgment is couched in such general terms, that it can only be regarded as a provisional announcement, or as the introduction to the body of the book by which it is followed. The *first* part contains an extended address, divided into three sections by the recurrence of שְׁמַע (hear ye) in ch. iii. 1, iv. 1, and v. 1. The address consists of a "great warning to repent," in which the prophet holds up before the sinful Israelites, especially the rulers of the kingdom, the arts of injustice and wickedness that are current among them, and proclaims a judgment which embraces the destruction of the palaces and holy places, the overthrow of the kingdom, and the transportation of the people. In ch. iii. the sin and punishment are described in the most general form. In ch. iv. the prophet sweeps away from the self-secure sinners the false ground of confidence afforded by their own worship, recalls to their mind the judgments with which God has already visited them, and summons them to stand before God as their judge. In ch. v. and vi., after a mournful elegy concerning the fall of the house of Israel (ch. v. 1-3), he points out to the penitent the way to life, coupled with the repeated summons to seek the Lord, and that which is good (ch. v. 4, 6, 14); and then, in the form of a woe, for which a double reason is assigned (ch. v. 18, vi. 1), he takes away all hope of deliverance from the impenitent and hardened. Throughout the whole of this address Amos prophesies chiefly to the ten tribes, whom he repeatedly addresses, predicting ruin and exile. At the same time, he not only addresses

his words in the introduction (ch. iii. 1, 2) to all Israel of the twelve tribes, whom Jehovah brought out of Egypt, but he also pronounces the last woe (ch. vi. 1) upon the secure ones on Zion, and the careless ones on the mountain of Samaria; so that his prophecy also applies to the kingdom of Judah, and sets before it the same fate as that of the kingdom of the ten tribes, if it should fall into the same sin. The *second* part contains five visions, and at the close the proclamation of salvation. The first two visions (ch. vii. 1-3 and 4-6) threaten judgments; the next two (ch. vii. 7-9, viii. 1-3) point out the impossibility of averting the judgment, and the ripeness of the people for it. Between these, viz. in ch. vii. 10-17, the conversation between the prophet and the chief priest at Bethel is related. The substance of the fourth vision is carried out still further, in a simple prophetic address (ch. viii. 4-14). Lastly, the fifth vision (ch. ix. 1) shows the overthrow and ruin of the whole of Israel, and is also still further expanded in a plain address (ch. ix. 2-10). To this there is appended the promise of the restoration of the fallen kingdom of God, of its extension through the adoption of the Gentiles, and of its eternal glorification (ch. ix. 11-15). This conclusion corresponds to the introduction (ch. i. and ii.). Like all the nations that rise up in hostility to the kingdom of God, even Judah and Israel shall fall victims to the judgment, on account of their unrighteousness and idolatry, in order that the kingdom of God may be purified from its dross, be exalted to glory, and so be made perfect. This is the fundamental thought of the writings of Amos, who was called by the Lord to preach this truth to the nation of Israel. And just as the close of his book points back to the introduction (ch. i. and ii.), so also do the visions of the second part correspond to the addresses of the first, embodying the substance of the addresses in significant symbols. The parallel between the fifth vision and the elegy struck up in ch. v. 1 is very conspicuous; and it is also impossible to overlook the material agreement between the first and second visions and the enumeration in ch. iv. 6-11, of the divine visitations that had already fallen upon Israel; whilst the third and fourth visions set clearly before the eye the irrevocable character of the judgments with which careless and wanton sinners are threatened in ch. iii.-vi.

There is evidently no foundation for the assumption that the second part contains "the true kernel of his work," namely, "the addresses which Amos originally delivered at Bethel;" and that the first part, together with the introduction (ch. i.-vi.) and the Messianic conclusion (ch. ix. 11-15), is purely a written description, composed by Amos after his return from Bethel to Judah, to give a further expansion to his original utterances (Ewald, Baur). This by no means follows, either from the fact that the account of what the prophet experienced at Bethel is inserted in the series of visions, as it moves on step by step, and that the place in which it occurs (viz. ch. vii.) is evidently its original position, or from the circumstance that Amos commences his work with a saying of Joel (compare ch. i. 2 with Joel iv. 16), and evidently refers to Joel (iii. 18) even in the promise at the close (ch. ix. 13). For the position of this account in ch. vii. proves nothing further than that Amos related those visions in Bethel; and the allusion to Joel simply presupposes an acquaintance with the predictions of this prophet. If there were no previous addresses, the visions in ch. vii. and viii. would have nothing to explain their occurrence, and would also be lacking in the requisite clearness. Moreover, the work of Amos in Bethel cannot possibly be limited to ch. vii.-ix. And lastly, the addresses in ch. iv.-vi. are throughout so individual, so full of life, and so impressive, that they clearly reflect the original oral delivery, even though it may be nothing more than the essential substance of what was orally delivered, that has been given here. Only ch. i. and ii. appear to have been really conceived in the form of a written composition, and placed at the head of the book at the time when it was first compiled, although certain thoughts that had been orally expressed may lie at the foundation even there.

For the exegetical writings upon Amos, see my *Lehrbuch der Einleitung*, pp. 284-5.

## EXPOSITION.

## I. THE APPROACHING JUDGMENT.—CHAP. I. AND II.

Starting from the saying of Joel (iii. 16), "Jehovah will roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem," Amos announces the wrath of the Lord, which will discharge itself upon Damascus (i. 3-5), Philistia (i. 6-8), Tyre (i. 9, 10), Edom (i. 11, 12), Ammon (i. 13-15), Moab (ii. 1-3), Judah (ii. 4, 5), and Israel (ii. 6-16). The announcement of this judgment maintains a certain uniformity throughout; every one of these nations being threatened with the destruction of the kingdom, or with ruin and exile, "for three or four transgressions;" and the threat, as Rückert has well expressed it, "rolling like a storm, in strophe after strophe, over all the surrounding kingdoms," touching Judah as it passes along, and eventually resting over Israel. The six heathen nations mentioned, three of which are related to the covenant nation, represent all the Gentile nations, which rise up in hostility to the people or kingdom of God. For the sins on account of which they are to be punished, are not certain general breaches of morality, but crimes which they have committed against the people of God; and in the case of Judah, contempt of the commandments of the Lord, and idolatry. The whole section, not merely ch. i. 2-ii. 5, but also ch. ii. 6-16, has an introductory character. Whilst, on the one hand, the extension of the prediction of judgment to the Gentile nations indicates the necessity and universality of the judgment, which is sent to promote the interests of the kingdom of God, and preaches the truth that every one will be judged according to his attitude towards the living God; on the other hand, the place assigned to the Gentile nations, viz. before the covenant nation, not only sharpened the conscience, but taught this lesson, that if even the nations which had only sinned indirectly against the living God were visited with severe punishment, those to whom God had so gloriously revealed Himself (ch. ii. 9-11, iii. 1) would be punished still more surely for their apostasy (ch. iii. 2). It is with this design that Judah is also mentioned along with Israel, and in fact before it.

"The intention was to impress this truth most strongly upon the people of the ten tribes, that not even the possession of such glorious prerogatives as the temple and the throne of David could avert the merited punishment. If this be the energy of the justice of God, what have we to look for?" (Hengstenberg.)

Ch. i. Ver. 1 contains the heading, which has already been discussed in the Introduction; and *אֲשֶׁר הָזָה* ("which he saw") refers to *דְּבָרֵי עָמוֹס* (the words of Amos). Ver. 2 forms the Introduction, which is attached to the heading by *וַיֹּאמֶר*, and announces a revelation of the wrath of God upon Israel, or a theocratic judgment. Ver. 2. "*Jehovah roars out of Zion, and He utters His voice from Jerusalem; and the pastures of the shepherds mourn, and the head of Carmel withers.*" The voice of Jehovah is the thunder, the earthly substratum in which the Lord manifests His coming to judgment (see at Joel iii. 16). By the adoption of the first half of the verse word for word from Joel, Amos connects his prophecy with that of his predecessor, not so much with the intention of confirming the latter, as for the purpose of alarming the sinners who were at ease in their security, and overthrowing the delusive notion that the judgment of God would only fall upon the heathen world. This delusion he meets with the declaration, that at the threatening of the wrath of God the pastures of the shepherds, *i.e.* the pasture-ground of the land of Israel (cf. Joel i. 19), and the head of the forest-crowned Carmel, will fade and wither. *Carmel* is the oft-recurring promontory at the mouth of the Kishon on the Mediterranean (see the comm. on Josh. xix. 26 and 1 Kings xviii. 19), and not the place called Carmel on the mountains of Judah (Josh. xv. 55), to which the term *ראש* (head) is inapplicable (*vid.* ch. ix. 3 and Mic. vii. 14). Shepherds' pastures and Carmel individualized the land of Israel in a manner that was very natural to Amos the shepherd. With this introduction, Amos announces the theme of his prophecies. And if, instead of proceeding at once to describe still further the judgment that threatens the kingdom of Israel, he first of all enumerates the surrounding nations, including Judah, as objects of the manifestation of the wrath of God, this enumeration cannot have any other object than the one described in our survey of the contents of the book. The enumeration opens with the kingdoms of Aram, Philistia,



and Tyre (Phœnicia), which were not related to Israel by any ties of kinship whatever.

Vers. 3-5. ARAM-DAMASCUS.—Ver. 3. “*Thus saith Jehovah, For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I shall not reverse it, because they have threshed Gilead with iron rollers,* Ver. 4. *I send fire into the house of Hazael, and it will eat the palaces of Ben-hadad,* Ver. 5. *And break in pieces the bolt of Damascus, and root out the inhabitant from the valley of Aven, and the sceptre-holder out of Beth-Eden: and the people of Aram will wander into captivity to Kir, saith Jehovah.*” In the formula, which is repeated in the case of every people, “for three transgressions, and for four,” the numbers merely serve to denote the multiplicity of the sins, the exact number of which has no bearing upon the matter. “The number four is added to the number three, to characterize the latter as simply set down at pleasure; in other words, it is as much as to say that the number is not exactly three or four, but probably a still larger number” (Hitzig). The expression, therefore, denotes not a small but a large number of crimes, or “ungodliness in its worst form” (Luther; see at Hos. vi. 2<sup>1</sup>). That these numbers are to be understood in this way, and not to be taken in a literal sense, is unquestionably evident from the fact, that in the more precise account of the sins which follows, as a rule, only one especially grievous crime is mentioned by way of example. **לֹא אֶשְׁׁבֹּט** (I will not reverse it) is inserted before the more minute description of the crimes, to show that the threat is irrevocable. **הַשִּׁיב** signifies to turn, i.e. to make a thing go back, to withdraw it, as in Num. xxiii. 20, Isa. xliiii. 13. The suffix attached to **אֶשְׁׁבֹּט** refers neither to *qôlô* (his voice), nor “to the idea of **דִּבֶּר** which is implied in **כֹּה אָמַר** (thus saith), or the substance of the threatening thunder-voice” (Baur); for *hêshîbh dâbhâr* signifies to give an answer, and never to make a word ineffectual. The reference is to the punishment threatened afterwards, where the masculine stands in the place of the neuter. Consequently the close of the verse contains the epexegetis of

<sup>1</sup> J. Marck has correctly explained it thus: “When this perfect number (three) is followed by *four*, by way of gradation, God not only declares that the measure of iniquity is full, but that it is filled to overflowing and beyond all measure.”

the first clause, and vers. 4 and 5 follow with the explanation of *וְרַעַם אֶבֶן* (I will not turn it). The threshing of the Gileadites with iron threshing-machines is mentioned as the principal transgression of the Syrian kingdom, which is here named after the capital Damascus (see at 2 Sam. viii. 6). This took place at the conquest of the Israelitish land to the east of the Jordan by Hazael during the reign of Jehu (2 Kings x. 32, 33, cf. ch. xiii. 7), when the conquerors acted so cruelly towards the Gileadites, that they even crushed the prisoners to pieces with iron threshing-machines, according to a barbarous war-custom that is met with elsewhere (see at 2 Sam. xii. 31). *Chârûts* (= *chârîts*, 2 Sam. xii. 31), lit. sharpened, is a poetical term applied to the threshing-roller, or threshing-cart (*mōrag chârûts*, Isa. xli. 15). According to Jerome, it was "a kind of cart with toothed iron wheels underneath, which was driven about to crush the straw in the threshing-floors after the grain had been beaten out." The threat is individualized historically thus: in the case of the capital, the burning of the palaces is predicted; and in that of two other places, the destruction of the people and their rulers; so that both of them apply to both, or rather to the whole kingdom. The palaces of Hazael and Benhadad are to be sought for in Damascus, the capital of the kingdom (Jer. xlix. 27). Hazael was the murderer of Benhadad I., to whom the prophet Elisha foretold that he would reign over Syria, and predicted the cruelties that he would practise towards Israel (2 Kings viii. 7 sqq.). Benhadad is generally regarded as his son; but the plural "palaces" leads us rather to think of both the first and second Benhadad, and this is favoured by the circumstance that it was only during his father's reign that Benhadad II. oppressed Israel, whereas after his death, and when he himself ascended the throne, the conquered provinces were wrested from him by Joash king of Israel (2 Kings xiii. 22-25). The breaking of the bar (the bolt of the gate) denotes the conquest of the capital; and the cutting off of the inhabitants of *Biq'ath-Aven* indicates the slaughter connected with the capture of the towns, and not their deportation; for *hikhrîth* means to exterminate, so that *gālâh* (captivity) in the last clause applies to the remainder of the population that had not been slain in war. In the parallel clause *וְהַמֶּלֶךְ הַשֵּׁנִי*, the sceptre-holder, i.e. the ruler (either the

king or his deputy), corresponds to *yōshēbh* (the inhabitant); and the thought expressed is, that both prince and people, both high and low, shall perish. The two places, *Valley-Aven* and *Beth-Eden*, cannot be discovered with any certainty; but at any rate they were capitals, and possibly they may have been the seat of royal palaces as well as Damascus, which was the first capital of the kingdom.  $\text{נָחַל עַבְדִּים}$ , valley of nothingness, or of idols, is supposed by Ewald and Hitzig to be a name given to Heliopolis or Baalbek, after the analogy of Beth-Aven = Bethel (see at Hos. v. 8). They base their opinion upon the Alex. rendering  $\epsilon\kappa \pi\epsilon\delta\iota\omicron\nu \text{'}\Omega\nu$ , taken in connection with the Alex. interpretation of the Egyptian *On* (Gen. xli. 45) as Heliopolis. But as the LXX. have interpreted  $\text{נָחַל}$  by Heliopolis in the book of Genesis, whereas here they have merely reproduced the Hebrew letters  $\text{נָחַל}$  by  $\text{'}\Omega\nu$ , as they have in other places as well (e.g. Hos. iv. 15, v. 8, x. 5, 8), where Heliopolis cannot for a moment be thought of, the  $\pi\epsilon\delta\iota\omicron\nu \text{'}\Omega\nu$  of the LXX. furnishes no evidence in favour of Heliopolis, still less does it warrant an alteration of the Hebrew pointing (into  $\text{נָחַל}$ ). Even the Chaldee and Syriac have taken  $\text{נָחַל עַבְדִּים}$  as a proper name, and Ephraem Syrus speaks of it as "a place in the neighbourhood of Damascus, distinguished for idol-chapels." The supposition that it is a city is also favoured by the analogy of the other threatenings, in which, for the most part, cities only are mentioned. Others understand by it the valley near Damascus, or the present Bekaa between Lebanon and Antilibanus, in which Heliopolis was always the most distinguished city, and Robinson has pronounced in favour of this (*Bibl. Res.* p. 677). *Beth-Eden*, i.e. house of delight, is not to be sought for in the present village of Eden, on the eastern slope of Lebanon, near to the cedar forest of Bshirrai, as the Arabic name of this village  $\text{أهدن}$  has nothing in common with the Hebrew  $\text{עֵדֶן}$  (see at 2 Kings xix. 12); but it is the *Παράδεισος* of the Greeks, which Ptolemy (v. 15, 20) places ten degrees south and five degrees east of Laodicea, and which Robinson imagines that he has found in Old Jusieh, not far from Ribleh, a place belonging to the times before the Saracens, with very extensive ruins (see *Bibl. Researches*, pp. 542-6, and 556). The rest of the population of Aram would be carried away to *Kir*, i.e. to the country on

the banks of the river *Kur*, from which, according to ch. ix. 7, the Syrians originally emigrated. This prediction was fulfilled when the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser conquered Damascus in the time of Ahaz, and broke up the kingdom of Syria (2 Kings xvi. 9). The closing words, *'âmar Y'hôvâh* (saith the Lord), serve to add strength to the threat, and therefore recur in vers. 8, 15, and ch. ii. 3.

Vers. 6-8. PHILISTIA.—Ver. 6. “*Thus saith Jehovah, For three transgressions of Gaza, and for four, I shall not reverse it, because they carried away captives in full number to deliver them up to Edom, Ver. 7. I send fire into the wall of Gaza, and it will eat their palaces; Ver. 8. And I exterminate the inhabitant from Ashdod, and the sceptre-holder from Askelon, and turn my hand against Ekron, and the remnant of the Philistines will perish, saith the Lord Jehovah.*” Instead of the Philistines generally, the prophet mentions *Gaza* in ver. 6. This is still a considerable town, bearing the old name *Guzzeh* (see the comm. on Josh. xiii. 3), and was the one of the five capitals of the Philistines which had taken the most active part as a great commercial town in handing over the Israelitish prisoners to the Edomites. For it is evident that *Gaza* is simply regarded as a representative of Philistia, from the fact that in the announcement of the punishment, the other capitals of Philistia are also mentioned. *Gálûth sh'lemâh* is correctly explained by Jerome thus: “a captivity so perfect and complete, that not a single captive remained who was not delivered to the Idumæans.” The reference is to captive Israelites, who were carried off by the Philistines, and disposed of by them to the Edomites, the arch-enemies of Israel. Amos no doubt had in his mind the invasion of Judah by the Philistines and tribes of Arabia Petræa in the time of Joram, which is mentioned in 2 Chron. xxi. 16, and to which Joel had already alluded in Joel iv. 3 sqq., where the Phœnicians and Philistines are threatened with divine retribution for having plundered the land, and sold the captive Judæans to the Javanites (Ionians). But it by no means follows from this, that the “sons of Javan” mentioned in Joel iv. 6 are not Greeks, but the inhabitants of the Arabian *Javan* noticed in Ezek. xxvii. 19. The fact was simply this: the Philistines sold one portion of the many prisoners, taken

at that time, to the Edomites, and the rest to the Phœnicians, who disposed of them again to the Greeks. Joel simply mentions the latter circumstance, because, in accordance with the object of his prophecy, his design was to show the wide dispersion of the Jews, and their future gathering out of all the lands of their banishment. Amos, on the other hand, simply condemns the delivering of the captives to Edom, the arch-foe of Israel, to indicate the greatness of the sin involved in this treatment of the covenant nation, or the hatred which the Philistines had displayed thereby. As a punishment for this, the cities of Philistia would be burned by their enemies, the inhabitants would be exterminated, and the remnant perish. Here again, as in vers. 4, 5, the threat is rhetorically individualized, so that in the case of one city the burning of the city itself is predicted, and in that of another the destruction of its inhabitants. (On Ashdod, Askelon, and Ekron, see the comm. on Josh. xiii. 3.) *וְהָשִׁיב יָד*, to return the hand, i.e. to turn or stretch it out again (see comm. on 2 Sam. viii. 3). The use of this expression may be explained on the ground, that the destruction of the inhabitants of Ashdod and Askelon has already been thought of as a stretching out of the hand. The fifth of the Philistian capitals, Gath, is not mentioned, though not for the reason assigned by *Kimchi*, viz. that it belonged to the kings of Judah, or had been conquered by Uzziah, for Uzziah had not only conquered Gath and Jabneh, but had taken Ashdod as well, and thrown down the walls (2 Chron. xxvi. 6), and yet Amos mentions Ashdod; nor because Gath had been taken by the Syrians (2 Kings xii. 18), for this Syrian conquest was not a lasting one, and in the prophet's time (cf. ch. vi. 2), and even later (cf. Mic. i. 10), it still maintained its independence, and was a very distinguished city; but for the simple reason that the individualizing description given by the prophet did not require the complete enumeration of all the capitals, and the idea of Gath being excepted from the fate with which the other cities are threatened, is precluded by the comprehensive terms in which the threat is concluded. For whilst "the remnant of the Philistines" does indeed denote "not the remaining Philistines who had not yet been named, but all that was still in existence, and had escaped destruction" (ch. ix. 12 and Jer. vi. 9), it nevertheless includes

not merely the four states just named, but every part of Philistia that had hitherto escaped destruction, so that Gath must be included.

Vers. 9, 10. TYRE or PHŒNICIA.—Ver. 9. *“Thus saith Jehovah: For three transgressions of Tyre, and for four, I shall not reverse it, because they have delivered up prisoners in full number to Edom, and have not remembered the brotherly covenant, Ver. 10. I send fire into the wall of Tyrus, and it will devour their palaces.”* In the case of Phœnicia, the capital only (Tzōr, *i.e.* Tyrus; see at Josh. xix. 29) is mentioned. The crime with which it is charged is similar to the one for which the Philistines were blamed, with this exception, that instead of *עַל־הַגְּלוּתָם לְהַסִּיר* (ver. 6) we have simply *עַל־הַסְּגִירָם*. If, therefore, Tyre is only charged with delivering up the captives to Edom, and not with having carried them away, it must have bought the prisoners from an enemy of Israel, and then disposed of them to Edom. From what enemy they were purchased, it is impossible to determine with certainty. Probably from the Syrians, in the wars of Hazael and Benhadad with Israel; for there is nothing at variance with this in the fact that, when they purchased Israelitish captives in the time of Joram, they sold them to Javan. For a commercial nation, carrying on so extensive a trade as the Phœnicians did, would have purchased prisoners in more than one war, and would also have disposed of them as slaves to more nations than one. Tyre had contracted all the more guilt through this trade in Israelitish slaves, from the fact that it had thereby been unmindful of the brotherly covenant, *i.e.* of the friendly relation existing between Israel and itself—for example, the friendly alliance into which David and Solomon had entered with the king of Tyre (2 Sam. v. 11; 1 Kings v. 15 sqq.)—and also from the fact that no king of Israel or Judah had ever made war upon Phœnicia.

Vers. 11, 12. EDM.—Ver. 11. *“Thus saith Jehovah: For three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I shall not reverse it, because it pursues its brother with the sword, and stifles its compassion, and its anger tears in pieces for ever, and it keeps its wrath for ever, Ver. 12. I send fire into Teman, and it will*

*devour the palaces of Bozrah.*" Edom and the two following nations were related to Israel by lineal descent. In the case of Edom, Amos does not condemn any particular sins, but simply its implacable, mortal hatred towards its brother nation Israel, which broke out into acts of cruelty at every possible opportunity. וְשָׂחַת רִחְמָיו, he annihilates, *i.e.* suppresses, stifles his sympathy or his compassionate love; this is still dependent upon רָדְפוֹ, על, the preposition על continuing in force as a conjunction before the infinitive (*i.e.* as equivalent to אָשַׁר, על), and the infinitive passing into the finite verb (cf. ch. ii. 4). In the next clause אַפּוֹ is the subject: its wrath tears in pieces, *i.e.* rages destructively (compare Job xvi. 9, where *tārāph* is applied to the wrath of God). In the last clause, on the other hand, Edom is again the subject; but it is now regarded as a kingdom, and construed as a feminine, and consequently עֲבָרָתָהּ is the object, and placed at the head as an absolute noun. שְׁמֶרָה, with the tone upon the *penult*. (*mīlél*) on account of *netsach*, which follows with the tone upon the first syllable, stands for שְׁמֶרָה (it preserves it), the *mappik* being omitted in the toneless syllable (compare Ewald, § 249, *b*). If עֲבָרָתָהּ were the subject, the verb would have to be pointed שְׁמֶרָה. Again, the rendering proposed by Ewald, "his fury lies in wait for ever," is precluded by the fact that שָׁמַר, when applied to wrath in Jer. iii. 5, signifies to keep, or preserve, and also by the fact that lying in wait is generally inapplicable to an emotion. *Teman*, according to Jerome (*ad h. l.*), is *Idumæorum regio quæ vergit ad australem partem*, so that here, just as in ch. ii. 2 and 5, the land is mentioned first, and then the capital.<sup>1</sup> *Bozrah*, an important city, supposed to be the capital of Idumæa (see comm. on Gen. xxxvi. 33). It was to the south of the Dead Sea, and has been preserved in *el-Buseireh*, a village with ruins in Jebâl (see Robinson, *Pal.* ii. p. 570), and must not be confounded with *Bossra* in Hauran (Burckhardt, *Syr.* p. 364).

<sup>1</sup> It is true that, according to Eusebius, Jerome does also mention in the *Onom.* a *villa* (κώμη) named *Teman*, which was five Roman miles from Petra, and in which there was a Roman garrison; and also that there is a *Teman* in Eastern Hauran (see Wetzstein in Delitzsch's *Comm. on Job*, i. 73); but in the Old Testament *Teman* is never to be understood as referring to a city.

Vers. 13-15. AMMON.—Ver. 13. “*Thus saith Jehovah: For three transgressions of the sons of Ammon, and for four, I shall not reverse it, because they have ripped up the pregnant women of Gilead, to widen their border,* Ver. 14. *I kindle fire in the wall of Rabbah, and it will devour its palaces, with the war-cry on the day of slaughter, in the storm on the day of the tempest.* Ver. 15. *And their king shall go into captivity, he and his princes all at once, saith Jehovah.*” The occasion on which the Ammonites were guilty of such cruelty towards the Israelites as is here condemned, is not recorded in the historical books of the Old Testament; possibly during the wars of Hazael with Israel, when they availed themselves of the opportunity to widen their territory by conquering back the land which had been wrested from them by Sihon king of the Amorites, and was then taken possession of by the Israelites, when he was overcome by them,—a thing which they had attempted once before in the time of Jephthah the judge (Judg. xi. 12 sqq.). We may see from Jer. xlix. 1 sqq. that they had taken possession of the territory of the tribe of Gad, which lay nearest to them, though probably not till after the carrying away of the tribes beyond Jordan by the Assyrians (2 Kings xv. 29). The ripping up of the women with child (see at 2 Kings viii. 12) is singled out as the climax of the cruelties which the Ammonites inflicted upon the Israelites during the war. As a punishment for this, their capital was to be burned, and the king, with the princes, to wander into exile, and consequently their kingdom was to be destroyed. *Rabbâh*, i.e. the great one, is the abbreviated name of the capital; Rabbah of the children of Ammon, which has been preserved in the ruins of *Aurân* (see at Deut. iii. 11). The threat is sharpened by the clause *בְּתִרְעָהּ וְנָוּ*, at the war-cry on the field of battle, i.e. an actual fact, when the enemy shall take the city by storm. *בְּסִיעֵר וְנָוּ* is a figurative expression applied to the storming of a city carried by assault, like *בְּסִיפָהּ* in Num. xxi. 14. The reading *מֶלְכָּם*, “their (the Ammonites’) king,” is confirmed by the LXX. and the Chaldee, and required by *מֶלְכָּם* (cf. ch. ii. 3), whereas *Μαλχόμ*, *Melchom*, which is found in Aq., Symm., Jerome, and the Syriac, rests upon a false interpretation.

Chap ii. Vers. 1-3. MOAB.—Ver. 1. “*Thus saith Jehovah:*



*For three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I shall not reverse it, because it has burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime, Ver. 2. I send fire into Moab, and it will devour the palaces of Kirioth, and Moab will perish in the tumult, in the war-cry, in the trumpet-blast. Ver. 3. And I cut off the judge from the midst thereof, and all its princes do I strangle with it, saith Jehovah."* The burning of the bones of the king of Edom is not burning while he was still alive, but the burning of the corpse into lime, *i.e.* so completely that the bones turned into powder like lime (D. Kimchi), to cool his wrath still further upon the dead man (cf. 2 Kings xxiii. 16). This is the only thing blamed, not his having put him to death. No record has been preserved of this event in the historical books of the Old Testament; but it was no doubt connected with the war referred to in 2 Kings iii., which Joram of Israel and Jehoshaphat of Judah waged against the Moabites in company with the king of Edom; so that the Jewish tradition found in Jerome, viz. that after this war the Moabites dug up the bones of the king of Edom from the grave, and heaped insults upon them by burning them to ashes, is apparently not without foundation. As Amos in the case of all the other nations has mentioned only crimes that were committed against the covenant nation, the one with which the Moabites are charged must have been in some way associated with either Israel or Judah, that is to say, it must have been committed upon a king of Edom, who was a vassal of Judah, and therefore not very long after this war, since the Edomites shook off their dependence upon Judah in less than ten years from that time (2 Kings viii. 20). As a punishment for this, Moab was to be laid waste by the fire of war, and Keriyoth with its palaces to be burned down. *הַקִּרְיֹת* is not an appellative noun (*τῶν πόλεων αὐτῆς*, LXX.), but a proper name of one of the chief cities of Moab (cf. Jer. xlviii. 24, 41), the ruins of which have been discovered by Burckhardt (*Syr.* p. 630) and Seetzen (ii. p. 342, cf. iv. p. 384) in the decayed town of *Kereyat* or *Korriât*. The application of the term *נֶת* to Moab is to be explained on the supposition that the nation is personified. *מָלְחָם* signifies war tumult, and *בְּתוֹרֵעָה* is explained as in ch. i. 14 by *בְּקוֹל שׁוֹפָר*, blast of the trumpets, the signal for the assault or for the commencement of the battle. The judge with all the princes shall

be cut off *miggirbâh*, i.e. out of the land of Moab. The feminine suffix refers to Moab as a land or kingdom, and not to Keriyoth. From the fact that the *shôphêl* is mentioned instead of the king, it has been concluded by some that Moab had no king at that time, but had only a *shôphêl* as its ruler; and they have sought to account for this on the ground that Moab was at that time subject to the kingdom of the ten tribes (Hitzig and Ewald). But there is no notice in the history of anything of the kind, and it cannot possibly be inferred from the fact that Jeroboam restored the ancient boundaries of the kingdom as far as the Dead Sea (2 Kings xiv. 25). *Shôphêl* is analogous to *tômêkh shâbhet* in ch. i. 5, and is probably nothing more than a rhetorical expression applied to the מַלְכֵי, who is so called in the threat against Ammon, and simply used for the sake of variety. The threatening prophecies concerning all the nations and kingdoms mentioned from ch. i. 6 onwards were fulfilled by the Chaldeans, who conquered all these kingdoms, and carried the people themselves into captivity. For fuller remarks upon this point, see at Jer. xlvii. 49 and Ezek. xxv. 28.

Vers. 4, 5. JUDAH.—Ver. 4. "*Thus saith Jehovah: For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I shall not reverse it, because they have despised the law of Jehovah, and have not kept His ordinances, and their lies led them astray, after which their fathers walked,* Ver. 5. *I send fire into Judah, and it will devour the palaces of Jerusalem.*" With the announcement that the storm of the wrath of God will also burst upon Judah, Amos prepares the way for passing on to Israel, the principal object of his prophecies. In the case of Judah, he condemns its contempt of the law of its God, and also its idolatry. *Tôrâh* is the sum and substance of all the instructions and all the commandments which Jehovah had given to His people as the rule of life. *Chuqqim* are the separate precepts contained in the *thôrâh*, including not only the ceremonial commands, but the moral commandments also; for the two clauses are not only parallel, but synonymous. מִן־בִּלְבָּיָם, their lies, are their idols, as we may see from the relative clause, since "walking after" (*hâlakh 'achârê*) is the standing expression for idolatry. Amos calls the idols *lies*, not only as *res quæ fallunt* (Ges.), but as fabrications and nonentities (*'êlîm* and *hâbhâlim*),

having no reality in themselves, and therefore quite unable to perform what was expected of them. The "fathers" who walked after these lies were their forefathers generally, since the nation of Israel practised idolatry even in the desert (cf. ch. v. 26), and was more or less addicted to it ever afterwards, with the sole exception of the times of Joshua, Samuel, David, and part of the reign of Solomon, so that even the most godly kings of Judah were unable to eradicate the worship upon the high places. The punishment threatened in consequence, namely, that Jerusalem should be reduced to ashes, was carried out by Nebuchadnezzar.

Vers. 6-16. After this introduction, the prophet's address turns to Israel of the ten tribes, and in precisely the same form as in the case of the nations already mentioned, announces the judgment as irrevocable. At the same time, he gives a fuller description of the sins of Israel, condemning first of all the prevailing crimes of injustice and oppression, of shameless immorality and daring contempt of God (vers. 6-8); and secondly, its scornful contempt of the benefits conferred by the Lord (vers. 9-12), and threatening inevitable trouble in consequence (vers. 13-16). Ver. 6. *"Thus saith Jehovah: For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I shall not reverse it, because they sell the righteous for money, and the poor for a pair of shoes. Ver. 7. They who pant after dust of the earth upon the head of the poor, and bend the way of the meek: and a man and his father go to the same girl, to desecrate my holy name. Ver. 8. And they stretch themselves upon pawned clothes by every altar, and they drink the wine of the punished in the house of their God."* The prophet condemns four kinds of crimes. The *first* is unjust treatment, or condemnation of the innocent in their administration of justice. Selling the righteous for silver, *i.e.* for money, refers to the judges, who were bribed to punish a man as guilty of the crime of which he was accused, when he was really *tsaddiq*, *i.e.* righteous in a judicial, not in a moral sense, or innocent of any punishable crime. *Bakkeseph*, for money, *i.e.* either to obtain money, or for the money which they had already received, *viz.* from the accuser, for condemning the innocent. בַּעֲבוּר, on account of, is not synonymous with בְּ *pretii*; for they did not sell the poor man merely to get a pair of sandals for him, as the worst

possible slave was certainly worth much more than this (cf. Ex. xxi. 32); but the poor debtor who could not pay for a pair of shoes, *i.e.* for the merest trifle, the judge would give up to the creditor for a slave, on the strength of the law in Lev. xxv. 39 (cf. 2 Kings iv. 1). As a *second* crime, Amos reproves in ver. 7a their thirst for the oppression of the quiet in the land. דָּלִים, *ταπεινός*, and עֲנִיִּים, *πραΐς*. The address is carried on in participles, in the form of lively appeal, instead of quiet description, as is frequently the case in Amos (cf. ch. v. 7, vi. 3 sqq., 13, viii. 14), and also in other books (cf. Isa. xl. 22, 26; Ps. xix. 11). In the present instance, the article before the participle points back to the suffix in מְכַרֵּם, and the finite verb is not introduced till the second clause. שָׁאֵף, to gasp, to pant, to long eagerly for earth-dust upon the head of the poor, *i.e.* to long to see the head of the poor covered with earth or dust, or to bring them into such a state of misery, that they scatter dust upon their head (cf. Job ii. 12; 2 Sam. i. 2). The explanation given by Hitzig is too far-fetched and unnatural, viz. that they grudge the man in distress even the handful of dust that he has strewn upon his head, and avariciously long for it themselves. To bend the way of the meek, *i.e.* to bring them into a trap, or cast them headlong into destruction by impediments and stumblingblocks laid in their path. The way is the way of life, their outward course. The idea that the way refers to the judgment or legal process is too contracted. The *third* crime is their profanation of the name of God by shameless immorality (ver. 7b); and the *fourth*, desecration of the sanctuary by drinking carousals (ver. 8). A man and his father, *i.e.* both son and father, go to the girl, *i.e.* to the prostitute. The meaning is, to one and the same girl; but 'achath is omitted, to preclude all possible misunderstanding, as though going to different prostitutes was allowed. This sin was tantamount to incest, which, according to the law, was to be punished with death (cf. Lev. xviii. 7, 15, and xx. 11). Temple girls (*q'deshōth*) are not to be thought of here. The profanation of the name of God by such conduct as this does not indicate prostitution in the temple itself, such as was required by the licentious worship of Baal and Asherah (Ewald, Maurer, etc.), but consisted in a daring contempt of the commandments of God, as the original passage (Lev. xxii. 32) from which

Amos took the words clearly shows (cf. Jer. xxxiv. 16). By *l'ma'an*, in order that (not "so that"), the profanation of the holy name of God is represented as intentional, to bring out the daring character of the sin, and to show that it did not arise from weakness or ignorance, but was practised with studious contempt of the holy God. *B'gādīm chābhulīm*, pawned clothes, i.e. upper garments, consisting of a large square piece of cloth, which was wrapt all around, and served the poor for a counterpane as well. If a poor man was obliged to pawn his upper garment, it was to be returned to him before night came on (Ex. xxii. 25), and a garment so pawned was not to be slept upon (Deut. xxiv. 12, 13). But godless usurers kept such pledges, and used them as cloths upon which they stretched their limbs at feasts (*yattū, hiphil*, to stretch out, *sc.* the body or its limbs); and this they did by every altar, at sacrificial meals, without standing in awe of God. It is very evident that Amos is speaking of sacrificial feasting, from the reference in the second clause of the verse to the drinking of wine in the house of God. *עֲנִשִּׁים*, punished in money, i.e. fined. Wine of the punished is wine purchased by the produce of the fines. Here again the emphasis rests upon the fact, that such drinking carousals were held in the house of God. *'Elohēhem*, not their gods (idols), but their God; for Amos had in his mind the sacred places at Bethel and Dan, in which the Israelites worshipped Jehovah as their God under the symbol of an ox (calf). The expression *col-mizbēāch* (every altar) is not at variance with this; for even if *col* pointed to a plurality of altars, these altars were still *bāmōth*, dedicated to Jehovah. If the prophet had also meant to condemn actual idolatry, i.e. the worship of heathen deities, he would have expressed this more clearly; to say nothing of the fact, that in the time of Jeroboam II. there was no heathenish idolatry in the kingdom of the ten tribes, or, at any rate, it was not publicly maintained.

And if this daring contempt of the commandments of God was highly reprehensible even in itself, it became perfectly inexcusable if we bear in mind that Israel was indebted to the Lord its God for its elevation into an independent nation, and also for its sacred calling. For this reason, the prophet reminds the people of the manifestations of grace which it had received

from its God (vers. 9-11). Ver. 9. *"And yet I destroyed the Amorite before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars, and who was strong as the oaks; and I destroyed his fruit from above, and his roots from beneath."* Ver. 10. *"And yet I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and led you forty years in the desert, to take possession of the land of the Amorite."* The repeated *וַיִּשְׁמַד* is used with peculiar emphasis, and serves to bring out the contrast between the conduct of the Israelites towards the Lord, and the fidelity of the Lord towards Israel. Of the two manifestations of divine grace to which Israel owed its existence as an independent nation, Amos mentions first of all the destruction of the former inhabitants of Canaan (Ex. xxiii. 27 sqq., xxxiv. 11); and secondly, what was earlier in point of time, namely, the deliverance out of Egypt and guidance through the Arabian desert; not because the former act of God was greater than the latter, but in order to place first what the Lord had done for the nation, and follow that up with what He had done to the nation, that he may be able to append to this what He still continues to do (ver. 11). The nations destroyed before Israel are called Amorites, from the most powerful of the Canaanitish tribes, as in Gen. xv. 16, Josh. xxiv. 15, etc. To show, however, that Israel was not able to destroy this people by its own strength, but that Jehovah the Almighty God alone could accomplish this, he proceeds to transfer to the whole nation what the Israelitish spies reported as to their size, more especially as to the size of particular giants (Num. xiii. 32, 33), and describes the Amorites as giants as lofty as trees and as strong as trees, and, continuing the same figure, depicts their utter destruction or extermination as the destruction of their fruit and of their roots. For this figure of speech, in which the posterity of a nation is regarded as its fruit, and the kernel of the nation out of which it springs as the root, see Ezek. xvii. 9, Hos. ix. 16, Job xviii. 16. These two manifestations of divine mercy Moses impressed more than once upon the hearts of the people in his last addresses, to urge them in consequence to hold fast to the divine commandments and to the love of God (cf. Deut. viii. 2 sqq., ix. 1-6, xxix. 1-8).

But Jehovah had not only put Israel into possession of Canaan; He had also continually manifested Himself to it as

the founder and promoter of its spiritual prosperity. Ver. 11. "*And I raised up some of your sons as prophets, and some of your young men as dedicated ones (Naziræans). Ah, is it not so, ye sons of Israel? is the saying of Jehovah.*" Ver. 12. *But ye made the dedicated drink wine, and ye commanded the prophets, saying, Ye shall not prophesy.*" The institution of prophecy and the law of the Nazarite were gifts of grace, in which Israel had an advantage over every other nation, and by which it was distinguished above the heathen as the nation of God and the medium of salvation. Amos simply reminds the people of these, and not of earthly blessings, which the heathen also enjoyed, since the former alone were real pledges of the covenant of grace made by Jehovah with Israel; and it was in the contempt and abuse of these gifts of grace that the ingratitude of the nation was displayed in the most glaring light. The Nazarites are placed by the side of the prophets, who proclaimed to the nation the counsel and will of the Lord, because, although as a rule the condition of a Nazarite was merely the consequence of his own free will and the fulfilment of a particular vow, it was nevertheless so far a gift of grace from the Lord, that the resolution to perform such a vow proceeded from the inward impulse of the Spirit of God, and the performance itself was rendered possible through the power of this Spirit alone. (For a general discussion of the law of the Nazarite, see the commentary on Num. vi. 2-12, and my *Biblical Antiquities*, § 67.) The raising up of Nazarites was not only intended to set before the eyes of the people the object of their divine calling, or their appointment to be a holy nation of God, but also to show them how the Lord bestowed the power to carry out this object. But instead of suffering themselves to be spurred on by these types to strive earnestly after sanctification of life, they tempted the Nazarites to break their vow by drinking wine, from which they were commanded to abstain, as being irreconcilable with the seriousness of their sanctification (see my *Bibl. Ant.* § 67); and the prophets they prohibited from prophesying, because the word of God was burdensome to them (cf. ch. vii. 10 sqq.; Mic. ii. 6).

This base contempt of their covenant mercies the Lord would visit with a severe punishment. Ver. 13. "*Behold, I will press you down, as the cart presses that is filled with sheaves.*"

Ver. 14. *And the flight will be lost to the swift, and the strong one will not fortify his strength, and the hero will not deliver his soul.* Ver. 15. *And the carrier of the bow will not stand, and the swift-footed will not deliver, and the rider of the horse will not save his soul.* Ver. 16. *And the courageous one among the heroes will flee away naked in that day, is the saying of Jehovah."* The Lord threatens as a punishment a severe oppression, which no one will be able to escape. The allusion is to the force of war, under which even the bravest and most able heroes will succumb. *הָעֵץ*, from *עָץ*, Aramæan for *צָץ*, to press, construed with *tachath*, in the sense of *κατά*, downwards, to press down upon a person, i.e. to press him down (Winer, Ges., Ewald). This meaning is established by *עָץ* in Ps. lv. 4, and by *מִצָּץ* in Ps. lxvi. 11; so that there is no necessity to resort to the Arabic, as Hitzig does, or to alterations of the text, or to follow Baur, who gives the word the meaning, "to feel one's self pressed under another," for which there is no foundation in the language, and which does not even yield a suitable sense. The comparison instituted here to the pressure of a cart filled with sheaves, does not warrant the conclusion that Jehovah must answer to the cart; the simile is not to be carried out to this extent. The object to *הָעֵץ* is wanting, but may easily be supplied from the thought, namely, the ground over which the cart is driven. The *לֵה* attached to *הַמֵּלֶאכֶה* belongs to the latitude allowed in ordinary speech, and gives to *מֵלֶאכֶה* the reflective meaning, which is full in itself, has quite filled itself (cf. Ewald, § 315, a). In vers. 14-16 the effects of this pressure are individualized. No one will escape from it. *אֲבָר מָנוֹס*, flight is lost to the swift, i.e. the swift will not find time enough to flee. The allusion to heroes and bearers of the bow shows that the pressure is caused by war. *קָל בְּרַגְלָיו* belong together: "He who is light in his feet." The swift-footed will no more save his life than the rider upon a horse. *נִפְשׁוֹ* in ver. 15 belongs to both clauses. *אֲמִן לְבוֹ*, the strong in his heart, i.e. the hearty, courageous. *עָרוֹם*, naked, i.e. so as to leave behind him his garment, by which the enemy seizes him, like the young man in Mark xiv. 52. This threat, which implies that the kingdom will be destroyed, is carried out still further in the prophet's following addresses.



## II. PROPHECIES CONCERNING ISRAEL.—CHAP. III.—VI.

Although the expression "Hear this word," which is repeated at the commencement of ch. iii. iv. and v., suggests the idea of three addresses, the contents of these chapters show that they do not contain three separate addresses delivered to the people by Amos at different times, but that they group together the leading thoughts of appeals delivered by word of mouth, so as to form one long admonition to repentance. Commencing with the proofs of his right to predict judgment to the nation on account of its sins (ch. iii. 1-8), the prophet exposes the wickedness of Israel in general (ch. iii. 9-iv. 3), and then shows the worthlessness of the nation's trust in idolatry (ch. iv. 4-13), and lastly announces the destruction of the kingdom as the inevitable consequence of the prevailing injustice and ungodliness (ch. v. and vi.).

### ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE JUDGMENT.—CHAP. III.

Because the Lord has chosen Israel to be His people, He must visit all its sins (ver. 2), and has commissioned the prophet to announce this punishment (vers. 3-8). As Israel has heaped up oppression, violence, and wickedness, an enemy will come upon the land and plunder Samaria, and cause its inhabitants to perish, and demolish the altars of Bethel, and destroy the capital (vers. 9-15).

Vers. 1 and 2 contain the introduction and the leading thought of the whole of the prophetic proclamation. Ver. 1. "*Hear this word which Jehovah speaketh concerning you, O sons of Israel, concerning the whole family which I have brought up out of the land of Egypt, saying:* Ver. 2. *You only have I acknowledged of all the families of the earth; therefore will I visit all your iniquities upon you.*" The word of the Lord is addressed to all the family of Israel, which God had brought up out of Egypt, that is to say, to all the twelve tribes of the covenant nation, although in what follows it is the ten tribes of Israel alone who are primarily threatened with the destruction of the kingdom, to indicate at the very outset that Judah might anticipate a similar fate if it did not turn to its God with

sincerity. The threat is introduced by the thought that its divine election would not secure the sinful nation against punishment, but that, on the contrary, the relation of grace into which the Lord had entered with Israel demanded the punishment of all evil deeds. This cuts off the root of all false confidence in divine election. "To whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required. The greater the measure of grace, the greater also is the punishment if it is neglected or despised." This is the fundamental law of the kingdom of God. ידע does not mean to know, to become acquainted with, or to take knowledge of a person (Hitzig), but to acknowledge. Acknowledgment on the part of God is not merely taking notice, but is energetic, embracing man in his inmost being, embracing and penetrating with divine love; so that ידע not only includes the idea of love and care, as in Hos. xiii. 5, but expresses generally the gracious fellowship of the Lord with Israel, as in Gen. xviii. 19, and is practically equivalent to electing, including both the motive and the result of election. And because Jehovah had acknowledged, i.e. had singled out and chosen Israel as the nation best fitted to be the vehicle of His salvation, He must of necessity punish all its misdeeds, in order to purify it from the dross of sin, and make it a holy vessel of His saving grace.

Vers. 3-8. But this truth met with contradiction in the nation itself. The proud self-secure sinners would not hear such prophesying as this (compare ch. ii. 4, vii. 10 sq.). Amos therefore endeavours, before making any further announcement of the judgment of God, to establish his right and duty to prophesy, by a chain-like series of similes drawn from life. Ver. 3. *"Do two walk together without having agreed?"* Ver. 4. *"Does the lion roar in the forest, and he has no prey? does the young lion utter his cry out of his den, without having taken anything?"* Ver. 5. *"Does the bird fall into the trap on the ground, when there is no snare for him? does the trap rise up from the earth without making a capture?"* Ver. 6. *"Or is the trumpet blown in the city, and the people are not alarmed? or does misfortune happen in the city, and Jehovah has not done it?"* Ver. 7. *"For the Lord Jehovah does nothing at all, without having revealed His secret to His servants the prophets."* Ver. 8. *"The lion has roared; who does not fear? the Lord Jehovah hath spoken; who must not*

*prophecy?*" The contents of these verses are not to be reduced to the general thought, that a prophet could no more speak without a divine impulse than any other effect could take place without a cause. There was certainly no need for a long series of examples, such as we have in vers. 3-6, to substantiate or illustrate the thought, which a reflecting hearer would hardly have disputed, that there was a connection between cause and effect. The examples are evidently selected with the view of showing that the utterances of the prophet originate with God. This is obvious enough in vers. 7, 8. The first clause, "Do two men walk together, without having agreed as to their meeting?" (*nō'ad*, to betake one's self to a place, to meet together at an appointed place or an appointed time; compare Job ii. 11, Josh. xi. 5, Neh. vi. 2; not merely to agree together), contains something more than the trivial truth, that two persons do not take a walk together without a previous arrangement. The two who walk together are Jehovah and the prophet (Cyril); not Jehovah and the nation, to which the judgment is predicted (Cocceius, Marck, and others). Amos went as prophet to Samaria or Bethel, because the Lord had sent him thither to preach judgment to the sinful kingdom. But God would not threaten judgment if He had not a nation ripe for judgment before Him. The lion which roars when it has the prey before it is Jehovah (cf. ch. i. 2; Hos. xi. 10, etc.). לֹא בְּרָקָה אֵין לוֹ is not to be interpreted according to the second clause, as signifying "without having got possession of its prey" (Hitzig), for the lion is accustomed to roar when it has the prey before it and there is no possibility of its escape, and before it actually seizes it (cf. Isa. v. 29).<sup>1</sup> On the contrary, the perfect *lākhad* in the second clause is to be interpreted according to the first clause, not as relating to the roar of satisfaction with which the lion devours the prey in its den (Baur), but as a perfect used to describe a thing which was as certain as if it had already occurred. A lion has made a capture not

<sup>1</sup> The most terrible feature in the roaring of a lion is that with this *clarigatio*, or, if you prefer it, with this *classicum*, it declares war. And after the roar there immediately follows both slaughter and laceration. For, as a rule, it only roars with that sharp roar when it has the prey in sight, upon which it immediately springs (Bochart, *Hieroz.* ii. 25 seq., ed. Ros.).

merely when it has actually seized the prey and torn it in pieces, but when the prey has approached so near that it cannot possibly escape. *K<sup>z</sup>phîr* is the young lion which already goes in pursuit of prey, and is to be distinguished from the young of the lion, *gûr* (*catulus leonis*), which cannot yet go in search of prey (cf. Ezek. xix. 2, 3). The two similes have the same meaning. The second strengthens the first by the assertion that God not only has before Him the nation that is ripe for judgment, but that He has it in His power. The similes in ver. 5 do not affirm the same as those in ver. 4, but contain the new thought, that Israel has deserved the destruction which threatens it. *Pach*, a snare, and *môqêsh*, a trap, are frequently used synonymously; but here they are distinguished, *pach* denoting a bird-net, and *môqêsh* a springe, a snare which holds the bird fast. The earlier translators have taken *môqêsh* in the sense of *yôqêsh*, and understand it as referring to the bird-catcher; and Baur proposes to alter the text accordingly. But there is no necessity for this; and it is evidently unsuitable, since it is not requisite for a bird-catcher to be at hand, in order that the bird should be taken in a snare. The suffix *lâh* refers to *tsippôr*, and the thought is this: in order to catch a bird in the net, a springe (gin) must be laid for it. So far as the fact itself is concerned, *môqêsh* is "evidently that which is necessarily followed by falling into the net; in this instance it is sinfulness" (Hitzig); so that the meaning of the figure would be this: "Can destruction possibly overtake you, unless your sin draws you into it?" (cf. Jer. ii. 35.) In the second clause *pach* is the subject, and *הִנֵּף* is used for the ascent or springing up of the net. Hitzig has given the meaning of the words correctly: "As the net does not spring up without catching the bird, that has sent it up by flying upon it, can ye imagine that when the destruction passes by, ye will not be seized by it, but will escape without injury?" (cf. Isa. xxviii. 15.) Jehovah, however, causes the evil to be foretold. As the trumpet, when blown in the city, frightens the people out of their self-security, so will the voice of the prophet, who proclaims the coming evil, excite a salutary alarm in the nation (cf. Ezek. xxxiii. 1-5). For the calamity which is bursting upon the city comes from Jehovah, is sent by Him as a punishment. This thought is explained in vers. 7, 8, and with this explanation the whole series of

figurative sentences is made perfectly clear. The approaching evil, which comes from the Lord, is predicted by the prophet, because Jehovah does not carry out His purpose without having (אֲנִי יְהוָה, for when, except when he has, as in Gen. xxxii. 27) first of all revealed it to the prophets, that they may warn the people to repent and to reform. *Sōd* receives a more precise definition from the first clause of the verse, or a limitation to the purposes which God is about to fulfil upon His people. And since (this is the connection of ver. 8) the judgment with which the Lord is drawing near fills every one with fear, and Jehovah has spoken, *i.e.* has made known His counsel to the prophets, they cannot but prophesy.

Amos has thus vindicated his own calling, and the right of all the prophets, to announce to the people the judgments of God; and now (vers. 9-15) he is able to proclaim without reserve what the Lord has resolved to do upon sinful Israel. Ver. 9. *"Make it heard over the palaces in Ashdod, and over the palaces in the land of Egypt, and say, Assemble yourselves upon the mountains of Samaria, and behold the great tumult in the midst thereof, and the oppressed in the heart thereof."* Ver. 10. *"And they know not to do the right, is the saying of Jehovah, who heap up violence and devastation in their palaces."* The speaker is Jehovah (ver. 10), and the prophets are addressed. Jehovah summons them to send out the cry over the palaces in Ashdod and Egypt (לְכָל as in Hos. viii. 1), and to call the inhabitants of these palaces to hear, (1) that they may see the acts of violence, and the abominations in the palaces of Samaria; and (2) that they may be able to bear witness against Israel (ver. 13). This turn in the prophecy brings out to view the overflowing excess of the sins and abominations of Israel. The call of the prophets, however, is not to be uttered upon the palaces, so as to be heard far and wide (Baur and others), but over the palaces, to cause the inhabitants of them to draw near. It is they alone, and not the whole population of Ashdod and Egypt, who are to be called nigh; because only the inhabitants of the palace could pronounce a correct sentence as to the mode of life commonly adopted in the palaces of Samaria. Ashdod, one of the Philistian capitals, is mentioned by way of example, as a chief city of the uncircumcised, who were regarded by Israel as godless heathen; and Egypt is mentioned along with it, as the nation

whose unrighteousness and ungodliness had once been experienced by Israel to satiety. If therefore such heathen as these are called to behold the unrighteous and dissolute conduct to be seen in the palaces, it must have been great indeed. The mountains of Samaria are not the mountains of the kingdom of Samaria, or the mountains upon which the city of Samaria was situated—for Samaria was not built upon a plurality of mountains, but upon one only (ch. iv. 1, vi. 1)—but the mountains round about Samaria, from which you could look into the city, built upon one isolated hill. The city, built upon the hill of *Semer*, was situated in a mountain caldron or basin, about two hours in diameter, which was surrounded on all sides by lofty mountains (see at 1 Kings xvi. 24).<sup>1</sup> *M'hāmāh*, noise, tumult, denotes a state of confusion, in which everything is topsy-turvy, and all justice and order are overthrown by open violence (Maurer, Baur). *'Ashūqīm*, either the oppressed, or, taken as an abstract, the oppression of the poor (cf. ch. ii. 6). In ver. 10 the description is continued in the finite verb: they do not know how to do right; that is to say, injustice has become their nature; they who heap up sins and violence in their palaces like treasures.

Thus do they bring about the ruin of the kingdom. Ver. 11. “*Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah, An enemy, and that round about the land; and he will hurl down thy glory from thee, and thy palaces are plundered.*” Ver. 12. *Thus saith Jehovah, As the shepherd delivers out of the mouth of the lion two shin-bones or an ear-lappet, so will the sons of Israel deliver themselves; they who sit on the corner of the couch and on the damask of the bed.*” The threat is introduced in the form of an aposiopesis. *צַר*, enemy, *וּפְקִיבֵי הָאָרֶץ*, and indeed round about the land (1 explic. as in ch. iv. 10, etc.; and *פְּקִיבֵי* in the construct state construed as a preposition), i.e. will come, attack the land on all sides, and take possession of it. Others regard *צַר* as an abstract: oppression (from the Chaldee); but in this case we should have to supply *Jehovah* as the subject to *וְהוֹרִיד*; and although this is probable, it is by no means natural, as *Jehovah* is speaking. There is no foundation, on the other hand, for the

<sup>1</sup> “As the mountains round the hill of *Semer* are loftier than this hill itself, the enemy might easily discover the internal state of besieged Samaria.”—V. DE VELDE, *R. i.* p. 282.

remark, that if *tsar* signified the enemy, we should either find the plural *צָרִים*, or *הָצָר* with the article (Baumgarten). The very indefiniteness of *tsar* suits the sententious brevity of the clause. This enemy will hurl down the splendour of Samaria, "which ornaments the top of the mountain like a crown, Isa. xxviii. i. 3" (Hitzig: *על*, might, with the subordinate idea of glory), and plunder the palaces in which violence, *i.e.* property unrighteously acquired, is heaped up (ver. 10). The words are addressed to the city of Samaria, to which the feminine suffixes refer. On the fall of Samaria, and the plundering thereof, the luxurious grandees, who rest upon costly pillows, will only be able to save their life to the very smallest extent, and that with great difficulty. In the simile used in ver. 12 there is a slight want of proportion in the two halves, the object of the deliverance being thrown into the background in the second clause by the passive construction, and only indicated in the verb, to deliver themselves, *i.e.* to save their life. "A pair of shin-bones and a piece (*ἀπαξ λεγ.*), *i.e.* a lappet, of the ear," are most insignificant remnants. The grandees of Samaria, of whom only a few were to escape with their life, are depicted by Amos as those who sit on costly divans, without the least anxiety. *פֶּתַח מִטָּה*, the corner of the divan, the most convenient for repose. According to ch. vi. 4, these divans were ornamented with ivory, and according to the verse before us, they were ornamented with costly stuffs. *דָּמָשֶׁק* comes from *דַּמְשֶׁק*, Damascus, and signifies *damask*, an artistically woven material (see Ges. *Thes.* p. 346). This brings the visitation of God to an end. Even the altars and palaces are to be laid in ruins, and consequently Samaria will be destroyed.

This feature in the threat is brought out into peculiar prominence by a fresh introduction. Ver. 13. "*Hear ye, and testify it to the house of Jacob, is the utterance of the Lord, Jehovah, the God of hosts* : Ver. 14. "*That in the day when I visit the transgressions of the house of Israel upon it, I shall visit it upon the altars of Bethel; and the horns of the altar will be cut off, and fall to the ground.* Ver. 15. "*And I smite the winter-house over the summer-house, and the houses of ivory perish, and many houses vanish, is the saying of Jehovah.*" The words "Hear ye" cannot be addressed to the Israelites, for they could not bear witness against the house of Israel, but must

either refer to the prophets, as in ver. 9a ("publish ye"), or to the heathen, in which case they correspond to "assemble yourselves and behold" in ver. 9b. The latter assumption is the only correct one, for the context does not assign a sufficient motive for an address to the prophets. On the other hand, as the heathen have been summoned to convince themselves by actual observation of the sins that prevail in Samaria, it is perfectly in keeping that they should now hear what is the punishment that God is about to inflict upon Israel in consequence, and that they should bear witness against Israel from what they have heard. הָעֵיר ב, to bear witness towards or against (not "in," as Baur supposes). The house of Jacob is the whole of Israel, of the *twelve* tribes, as in ver. 1; for Judah was also to learn a lesson from the destruction of Samaria. As the appeal to the heathen to bear witness against Israel indicates the greatness of the sins of the Israelites, so, on the other hand, does the accumulation of the names of God in ver. 13b serve to strengthen the declaration made by the Lord, who possesses as God of hosts the power to execute His threats. יְיָ introduces the substance of what is to be heard. The punishment of the sins of Israel is to extend even to the altars of Bethel, the seat of the idolatrous image-worship, the hearth and home of the religious and moral corruption of the ten tribes. The smiting off of the horns of the altar is the destruction of the altars themselves, the significance of which culminated in the horns (see at Ex. xxvii. 2). The singular *hammizbēāch* (*the altar*) preceded by a plural is the singular of species (cf. Ges. § 108, 1), and does not refer to any particular one—say, for example, to the principal altar. The destruction of the palaces and houses (ver. 15) takes place in the capital. In the reference to the winter-house and summer-house, we have to think primarily of the royal palace (cf. Jer. xxxvi. 22); at the same time, wealthy noblemen may also have had them. עַל, lit. over, so that the ruins of one house fall upon the top of another; then "together with," as in Gen. xxxii. 12. בְּתֵי שֵׁן, ivory houses, houses the rooms of which are decorated by inlaid ivory. Ahab had a palace of this kind (1 Kings xxii. 39, compare Ps. xlv. 9). בְּתֵי רַבִּים, not the large houses, but many houses; for the description is rounded off with these words. Along with the palaces, many houses will also fall to the ground. The ful-



filment took place when Samaria was taken by Shalmanezzer (2 Kings xvii. 5, 6).

#### THE IMPENITENCE OF ISRAEL.—CHAP. IV.

The voluptuous and wanton women of Samaria will be overtaken by a shameful captivity (vers. 1-3). Let the Israelites only continue their idolatry with zeal (vers. 4, 5), the Lord has already visited them with many punishments without their having turned to Him (vers. 6-11); and therefore He must inflict still further chastisements, to see whether they will not at length learn to fear Him as their God (vers. 12, 13).

Ver. 1. *"Hear this word, ye cows of Bashan, that are upon the mountain of Samaria, that oppress there the humble and crush the poor, that say to their lords, Bring hither, that we may drink. Ver. 2. The Lord Jehovah hath sworn by His holiness: behold, days come upon you, that they drag you away with hooks, and your last one with fish-hooks. Ver. 3. And ye will go out through breaches in the wall, every one before him, and be cast away to Harmon, is the saying of Jehovah."* The commencement of this chapter is closely connected, so far as the contents are concerned, with the chapter immediately preceding. The prophet having there predicted, that when the kingdom was conquered by its enemies, the voluptuous grandees would perish, with the exception of a very few who would hardly succeed in saving their lives, turns now to the voluptuous women of Samaria, to predict in their case a shameful transportation into exile. The introduction, "Hear this word," does not point therefore to a new prophecy, but simply to a fresh stage in the prophecy, so that we cannot even agree with Ewald in taking vers. 1-3 as the conclusion of the previous prophecy (ch. iii.). The cows of Bashan are well-fed, fat cows, βόες εὔτροφοι, *vaccæ pingues* (Symm., Jer.), as Bashan had fat pastures, and for that reason the tribes that were richest in flocks and herds had asked for it as their inheritance (Num. xxxii.). The fuller definitions which follow show very clearly that by the cows of Bashan, Amos meant the rich, voluptuous, and violent inhabitants of Samaria. It is doubtful, however, whether he meant the rich and wanton wives of the great, as most of the modern commentators follow Theodor., Theodoret, and

others, in assuming; or "the rulers of Israel, and all the leading men of the ten tribes, who spent their time in pleasure and robbery" (Jerome); or "those rich, luxurious, and lascivious inhabitants of the palace of whom he had spoken in ch. iii. 9, 10" (Maurer), as the Chald., Luther, Calvin, and others suppose, and whom he calls cows, not oxen, to denote their effeminacy and their unbridled licentiousness. In support of the latter opinion we might adduce not only Hos. x. 11, where Ephraim is compared to a young heifer, but also the circumstance that from ver. 4 onwards the prophecy refers to the Israelites as a whole. But neither of these arguments proves very much. The simile in Hos. x. 11 applies to Ephraim as a kingdom or people, and the natural personification as a woman prepares the way for the comparison to an *'eglah*; whereas voluptuous and tyrannical grandees would be more likely to be compared to the bulls of Bashan (Ps. xxii. 13). And so, again, the transition in ver. 4 to the Israelites as a whole furnishes no help in determining more precisely who are addressed in vers. 1-3. By the cows of Bashan, therefore, we understand the voluptuous women of Samaria, after the analogy of Isa. iii. 16 sqq. and xxxii. 9-13, more especially because it is only by forcing the last clause of ver. 1 that it can be understood as referring to men. שָׂמְךָ for שָׂמְךָ, because the verb stands first (compare Isa. xxxii. 11). The mountain of Samaria is mentioned in the place of the city built upon the mountain (see at ch. iii. 9). The sin of these women consisted in the tyrannical oppression of the poor, whilst they asked their lords, *i.e.* their husbands, to procure them the means of debauchery. For שָׂמְךָ and שָׂמְךָ, compare Deut. xxviii. 33 and 1 Sam. xii. 3, 4, where the two words are already connected. הַבִּיָּאָה stands in the singular, because every wife speaks in this way to her husband. The announcement of the punishment for such conduct is introduced with a solemn oath, to make an impression, if possible, upon the hardened hearts. Jehovah swears by His holiness, *i.e.* as the Holy One, who cannot tolerate unrighteousness. בִּי (for) before הַיָּהוָה introduces the oath. Hitzig takes שָׂמְךָ as a *niphal*, as in the similar formula in 2 Kings xx. 17; but he takes it as a passive used impersonally with an accusative, after Gen. xxxv. 26 and other passages (though not Ex. xiii. 7). But as שָׂמְךָ unquestionably occurs as a *piel* in 1 Kings ix. 11, it is more natural to take

the same form as a *piel* in this instance also, and whilst interpreting it impersonally, to think of the enemy as understood. *Tsinnōth* = *tsinnim*, Prov. xxii. 5, Job v. 5, צַנָּה = צָן, thorns, hence hooks; so also *sirōth* = *sirim*, thorns, Isa. xxxiv. 13, Hos. ii. 8. *Dūgāh*, fishery; hence *sirōth dūgāh*, fish-hooks. 'Achārūth does not mean posterity, or the young brood that has grown up under the instruction and example of the parents (Hitzig), but simply "the end," the opposite of *re'shūth*, the beginning. It is "end," however, in different senses. Here it signifies the remnant (Chaldee), *i.e.* those who remain and are not dragged away with *tsinnōth*; so that the thought expressed is "all, even to the very last" (compare Hengstenberg, *Christology*, i. p. 368). אַחֲרֵיהֶם has a feminine suffix, whereas masculine suffixes were used before (עֲלֵיהֶם, אֲתֵכֶם); the universal gender, out of which the feminine was first formed. The figure is not taken from animals, into whose noses hooks and rings are inserted to tame them, or from large fishes that are let down into the water again by nose-hooks; for the technical terms applied to these hooks are חֹמֶה, חֹמֶה, and חֹמֶה (cf. Ezek. xxix. 4; Job xl. 25, 26); but from the catching of fishes, that are drawn out of the fish-pond with hooks. Thus shall the voluptuous, wanton women be violently torn away or carried off from the midst of the superfluity and debauchery in which they lived as in their proper element. פְּרָצִים הָעֵצִים, to go out of rents in the wall, עֵצִים being construed, as it frequently is, with the accusative of the place; we should say, "through rents in the wall," *i.e.* through breaches made in the wall at the taking of the city, not out at the gates, because they had been destroyed or choked up with rubbish at the storming of the city. "Every one before her," *i.e.* without looking round to the right or to the left (cf. Josh. vi. 5, 20). The words הַהֲרִמוֹתָ הַשְּׁלֵכְתָּנָה are difficult, on account of the ἀπ. λεγ. הַהֲרִמוֹתָ, and have not yet been satisfactorily explained. The form הַשְּׁלֵכְתָּנָה for הַשְּׁלֵכְתָּנָה is probably chosen simply for the purpose of obtaining a resemblance in sound to הַהֲרִמוֹתָ, and is sustained by אֲתָנָה for אֲתָנָה in Gen. xxxi. 6 and Ezek. xiii. 11. הַשְּׁלֵיף is applied to thrusting into exile, as in Deut. xxix. 27. The ἀπ. λεγ. הַהֲרִמוֹתָ with ה' loc. appears to indicate the place to which they were to be carried away or cast out. But the *hiphil* הַשְּׁלֵכְתָּנָה does not suit this, and consequently nearly all

the earlier translators have rendered it as a passive, ἀπορριφθήσεσθε (LXX.), *projiciemini* (Jerome); so also the Syr. and Chald. יִנָּלֶן יִתְּרוֹן, "men will carry them away captive." One Hebrew codex actually gives the *hophal*. And to this reading we must adhere; for the *hiphil* furnishes no sense at all, since the intransitive or reflective meaning, to plunge, or cast one's self, cannot be sustained, and is not supported at all by the passages quoted by Hitzig, viz. 2 Kings x. 25 and Job xxvii. 22; and still less does *haharmōnāh* denote the object cast away by the women when they go into captivity.<sup>1</sup> The literal meaning of *harmōnāh* or *harmōn* still remains uncertain. According to the etymology of הָרָם, to be high, it apparently denotes a high land: at the same time, it can neither be taken as an appellative, as Hesselberg and Maurer suppose, "the high land;" nor in the sense of 'armōn, a citadel or palace, as Kimchi and Gesenius maintain. The former interpretation is open to the objection, that we cannot possibly imagine why Amos should have formed a word of his own, and one which never occurs again in the Hebrew language, to express the simple idea of a mountain or high land; and the second to this objection, that "the citadel" would require something to designate it as a citadel or fortress in the land of the enemy.

<sup>1</sup> The Masoretic pointing probably originated in the idea that *harmōnāh*, corresponding to the talmudic *harmānā*, signifies royal power or dominion, and so Rashi interprets it: "ye will cast away the authority, i.e. the almost regal authority, or that pride and arrogance with which you bear yourselves to-day" (Ros.). This explanation would be admissible, if it were not that the use of a word which never occurs again in the old Hebrew for a thing so frequently mentioned in the Old Testament, rendered it very improbable. At any rate, it is more admissible than the different conjectures of the most recent commentators. Thus Hitzig, for example (*Comm.* ed. 3), would resolve *haharmōnāh* into *hāhār* and *mōnāh* = *m'ōnāh* ("and ye will plunge headlong to the mountain as a place of refuge"). The objections to this are, (1) that *hishlikh* does not mean to plunge headlong; (2) the improbability of *m'ōnāh* being contracted into *mōnāh*, when Amos has *m'ōnāh* in ch. iii. 4; and lastly, the fact that *m'ōnāh* means simply a dwelling, not a place of refuge. Ewald would read *hāhār rimmonāh* after the LXX., and renders it, "ye will cast Rimmonah to the mountain," understanding by Rimmonah a female deity of the Syrians. But antiquity knows nothing of any such female deity; and from the reference to a deity called *Rimmon* in 2 Kings v. 18, you cannot possibly infer the existence of a goddess *Rimmonah*. The explanation given by Schlottmann (*Hiob*, p. 182) and Paul Bötticher (*Rudimenta mythologiæ*

The unusual word certainly points to the name of a land or district, though we have no means of determining it more precisely.<sup>1</sup>

Vers. 4, 5. After this threat directed against the voluptuous women of the capital, the prophecy turns again to all the people. In bitter irony, Amos tells them to go on with zeal in their idolatrous sacrifices, and to multiply their sin. But they will not keep back the divine judgment by so doing. Ver. 4. *"Go to Bethel, and sin; to Gilgal, multiply sinning; and offer your slain-offerings in the morning, your tithes every three days. Ver. 5. And kindle praise-offerings of that which is leavened, and cry out freewill-offerings, proclaim it; for so ye love it, O sons of Israel, is the saying of the Lord, of Jehovah."* "Amos here describes how zealously the people of Israel went on pilgrimage to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Beersheba, those places of sacred associations; with what superabundant diligence they offered sacrifice and paid tithes; how they would rather do too much than too little, so that they even burnt upon the altar a portion of the leavened loaves of the praise-offering, which were only intended for the sacrificial meals, although none but unleavened bread was allowed to be offered; and lastly, how in their pure zeal for multiplying the works of piety, they so completely mistook

*semit.* 1848, p. 10)—namely, that *harmônâh* is the Phœnician goddess *Chusarthis*, called by the Greeks *Ἀρμονία*—is still more untenable, since *Ἀρμονία* is no more derived from the talmudic *harmân* than this is from the Sanscrit *pramāna* (Bötticher, *l.c.* p. 40); on the contrary, *harmân* signifies loftiness, from the Semitic root *הרם*, to be high, and it cannot be shown that there was a goddess called *Harman* or *Harmonia* in the Phœnician worship. Lastly, the fanciful idea of Bötticher, that *harmônâh* is contracted from *hâhar rimmônâh*, and that the meaning is, "and then ye throw, *i.e.* remove, the mountain (your Samaria) to Rimmon, that ancient place of refuge for expelled tribes" (*Judg.* xx. 45 sqq.), needs no refutation.

<sup>1</sup> Even the early translators have simply rendered *haharmônâh* according to the most uncertain conjectures. Thus LXX., *εἰς τὸ ὄρος τὸ Παρμάν* (*al.* *Περμάν*); Aq., *mons Armona*; Theod., *mons Mona*; the *Quinta: excelsus mons* (according to Jerome); and Theodoret attributes to Theodot. *ὁψηλὸν ὄρος*. The Chaldee paraphrases it thus: *לְהַרְהָרָא מִן טְוִי הָרְמִינִי*, "far beyond the mountains of Armenia." Symmachus also had *Armenia*, according to the statement of Theodoret and Jerome. But this explanation is probably merely an inference drawn from 2 Kings xvii. 23, and cannot be justified, as Bochart supposes, on the ground that *mônâh* or *môn* is identical with *minnt*.

their nature, as to summon by a public proclamation to the presentation of freewill-offerings, the very peculiarity of which consisted in the fact that they had no other prompting than the will of the offerer" (v. Hofmann, *Schriftbeweis*, ii. 2, p. 373). The irony of the summons to maintain their worship comes out very distinctly in the words *וַיִּשְׁעוּ*, and sin, or fall away from God. *הַגִּלְגָל* is not a nominative absolute, "as for Gilgal," but an accusative, and *וַיִּזְכֹּר* is to be repeated from the first clause. The absence of the copula before *הַרְבֵּי* does not compel us to reject the Masoretic accentuation, and connect *הַגִּלְגָל* with *וַיִּשְׁעוּ*, as Hitzig does, so as to obtain the unnatural thought, "sin ye towards Gilgal." On Gilgal mentioned along with Bethel as a place of idolatrous worship (here and ch. v. 5, as in Hos. iv. 15, ix. 15, and xii. 12), see at Hos. iv. 15. Offer your slain-offerings *labböger*, for the morning, i.e. every morning, like *layyôm* in Jer. xxxvii. 21. This is required by the parallel *ushlōsheth yāmim*, on the three of days, i.e. every three days. *וַיִּזְכֹּר . . . הַבִּיאִי* does not refer to the morning sacrifice prescribed in the law (Num. xxviii. 3)—for that is always called 'ōlāh, not *zebach*—but to slain sacrifices that were offered every morning, although the offering of *z'bhāchīm* every morning presupposes the presentation of the daily morning burnt-offering. What is said concerning the tithe rests upon the Mosaic law of the second tithe, which was to be brought every three years (Deut. xiv. 28, xxvi. 12; compare my *Bibl. Archäol.* § 71, Anm. 7). The two clauses, however, are not to be understood as implying that the Israelites had offered slain sacrifices every morning, and tithe every three days. Amos is speaking hyperbolically, to depict the great zeal displayed in their worship; and the thought is simply this: "If ye would offer slain sacrifices every morning, and tithe every three days, ye would only thereby increase your apostasy from the living God." The words, "kindle praise-offerings of that which is leavened," have been misinterpreted in various ways. *קִפְּרִי*, an *inf. absol.* used instead of the *imperative* (see Ges. § 131, 4, b). According to Lev. vii. 12–14, the praise-offering (*tōdāh*) was to consist not only of unleavened cakes and pancakes with oil poured upon them, but also of cakes of leavened bread. The latter, however, were not to be placed upon the altar, but one of them was to be assigned to the priest who sprinkled the

blood, and the rest to be eaten at the sacrificial meal. Amos now charges the people with having offered that which was leavened instead of unleavened cakes and pancakes, and with having burned it upon the altar, contrary to the express prohibition of the law in Lev. ii. 11. His words are not to be understood as signifying that, although outwardly the praise-offerings consisted of that which was unleavened, according to the command of the law, yet inwardly they were so base that they resembled unleavened cakes, inasmuch as whilst the material of the leaven was absent, the true nature of the leaven—namely, malice and wickedness—was there in all the greater quantity (Hengstenberg, *Dissertations*, vol. i. p. 143 translation). The meaning is rather this, that they were not content with burning upon the altar unleavened cakes made from the materials provided for the sacrifice, but that they burned some of the leavened loaves as well, in order to offer as much as possible to God. What follows answers to this: call out *n'dābhōth*, i.e. call out that men are to present freewill-offerings. The emphasis is laid upon קָרָאִי, which is therefore still further strengthened by הִשְׁמִיעִי. Their calling out *n'dābhōth*, i.e. their ordering freewill-offerings to be presented, was an exaggerated act of zeal, inasmuch as the sacrifices which ought to have been brought out of purely spontaneous impulse (cf. Lev. xxii. 18 sqq.; Deut. xii. 6), were turned into a matter of moral compulsion, or rather of legal command. The words, “for so ye love it,” show how this zeal in the worship lay at the heart of the nation. It is also evident from the whole account, that the worship in the kingdom of the ten tribes was conducted generally according to the precepts of the Mosaic law.

Vers. 6–11. But as Israel would not desist from its idolatrous worship, Jehovah would also continue to visit the people with judgments, as He had already done, though without effecting any conversion to their God. This last thought is explained in vers. 6–11 in a series of instances, in which the expression וְלֹא שָׁבְתֶם עָרִי (and ye have not returned to me), which is repeated five times, depicts in the most thorough manner the unwearying love of the Lord to His rebellious children.

Ver. 6. “And I have also given you cleanness of teeth in all your towns, and want of bread in all your places: and ye have

*not returned to me, is the saying of Jehovah.*" The strongly adversative *וְיִם אֵינִי* forms the antithesis to *כִּן אֲהַבְתֶּם*: Ye love to persist in your idolatry, and yet I have tried all means of turning you to me. Cleanness of teeth is explained by the parallel "want of bread." The first chastisement, therefore, consisted in famine, with which God visited the nation, as He had threatened the transgressors that He would do in the law (Deut. xxviii. 48, 57). For *שִׁב עַר*, compare Hos. xiv. 2.

Ver. 7. *"And I have also withholden the rain from you, in yet three months to the harvest; and have caused it to rain upon one city, and I do not cause it to rain upon another. One field is rained upon, and the field upon which it does not rain withers.* Ver. 8. *And two, three towns stagger to one town to drink water, and are not satisfied: and ye have not returned to me, is the saying of Jehovah.*" The second punishment mentioned is the withholding of rain, or drought, which was followed by the failure of the harvest and the scarcity of water (cf. Lev. xxvi. 19, 20; Deut. xxviii. 23). The rain "in yet (*i.e.* at the time when there were yet) three months to the harvest" is the so-called latter rain, which falls in the latter half of February and the first half of March, and is of the greatest importance to the vigorous development of the ears of corn and also of the grains. In southern Palestine the harvest commences in the latter half of April (Nisan), and falls for the most part in May and June; but in the northern part of the land it is from two to four weeks later (see my *Archäologie*, i. pp. 33, 34, ii. pp. 113, 114), so that in round numbers we may reckon three months from the latter rain to the harvest. But in order to show the people more clearly that the sending and withholding of rain belonged to Him, God caused it to rain here and there, upon one town and one field, and not upon others (the imperfections from *'amtir* onwards express the repetition of a thing, what generally happens, and *timmatēr*, third pers. fem., is used impersonally). This occasioned such distress, that the inhabitants of the places in which it had not rained were obliged to go to a great distance for the necessary supply of water to drink, and yet could not get enough to satisfy them. *וַיִּשְׁבַּח*, to stagger, to totter, expresses the insecure and trembling walk of a man almost fainting with thirst.

Ver. 9. *"I have smitten you with blight and yellowness; many*  
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*of your gardens, and of your vineyards, and of your fig-trees, and of your olive-trees, the locust devoured; and ye have not returned to me, is the saying of Jehovah.*" The third chastisement consisted in the perishing of the corn by blight, and by the ears turning yellow, and also in the destruction of the produce of the gardens and the fruits of the trees by locusts. The first is threatened in Deut. xxviii. 22, against despisers of the commandments of God; the second points to the threatenings in Deut. xxviii. 39, 40, 42. The *infin. constr. harbōth* is used as a substantive, and stands as a noun in the construct state before the following words; so that it is not to be taken adverbially in the sense of many times, or often, as though used instead of *harbēh* (cf. Ewald, § 280, c). On *gāzām*, see at Joel i. 4. The juxtaposition of these two plagues is not to be understood as implying that they occurred simultaneously, or that the second was the consequence of the first; still less are the two to be placed in causal connection with the drought mentioned in vers. 7, 8. For although such combinations do take place in the course of nature, there is no allusion to this in the present instance, where Amos is simply enumerating a series of judgments, through which Jehovah had already endeavoured to bring the people to repentance, without any regard to the time when they occurred.

The same thing may be said of the fourth chastisement mentioned in ver. 10, "*I have sent pestilence among you in the manner of Egypt, have slain your young men with the sword, together with the booty of your horses, and caused the stench of your camps to ascend, and that into your nose; and ye have not returned to me, is the saying of Jehovah.*" In the combination of pestilence and sword (war), the allusion to Lev. xxvi. 25 is unmistakeable (compare Deut. xxviii. 60, where the rebellious are threatened with all the diseases of Egypt). *בִּדְרֹךְ מִצְרַיִם*, in the manner (not in the road) of Egypt (compare Isa. x. 24, 26; Ezek. xx. 30), because pestilence is epidemic in Egypt. The idea that there is any allusion to the pestilence with which God visited Egypt (Ex. ix. 3 sqq.), is overthrown by the circumstance that it is only a dreadful murrain that is mentioned there. The slaying of the youths or young men points to overthrow in war, which the Israelites endured most grievously in the wars with the Syrians (compare

2 Kings viii. 12, xiii. 3, 7). עִם שְׂבִי סוּסֵיכֶם does not mean together with, or by the side of, the carrying away of your horses, *i.e.* along with the fact that your horses were carried away; for שְׂבִי does not mean carrying away captive, but the captivity, or the whole body of captives. The words are still dependent upon הָרַגְתִּי, and affirm that even the horses that had been taken perished,—a fact which is also referred to in 2 Kings xiii. 7. From the slain men and animals forming the camp the stench ascended, and that into their noses, “as it were, as an *’azkārâh* of their sins” (Hitzig), but without their turning to their God.

Ver. 11. “*I have destroyed among you, like the destruction of God upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were like a brand plucked out of the fire; and ye have not returned to me, is the saying of Jehovah.*” Proceeding from the smaller to the greater chastisements, Amos mentions last of all the destruction similar to that of Sodom and Gomorrah, *i.e.* the utter confusion of the state, by which Israel was brought to the verge of ruin, so that it had only been saved like a firebrand out of the fire. הַפְּכֵתִי does not refer to an earthquake, which had laid waste cities and hamlets, or a part of the land, say that mentioned in ch. i. 1, as Kimchi and others suppose; but it denotes the desolation of the whole land in consequence of devastating wars, more especially the Syrian (2 Kings xiii. 4, 7), and other calamities, which had undermined the stability of the kingdom, as in Isa. i. 9. The words פְּמַהֲפַחַת אֱלֹהִים וְנִי are taken from Deut. xxix. 22, where the complete desolation of the land, after the driving away of the people into exile on account of their obstinate apostasy, is compared to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. By thus playing upon this terrible threat uttered by Moses, the prophet seeks to show to the people what has already happened to them, and what still awaits them if they do not eventually turn to their God. They have again been rescued from the threatening destruction like a firebrand out of the fire (Zech. iii. 2) by the deliverer whom the Lord gave to them, so that they escaped from the power of the Syrians (2 Kings xiii. 5). But inasmuch as all these chastisements have produced no fruit of repentance, the Lord will now proceed to judgment with His people.

Ver. 12. “*Therefore thus will I do to thee, O Israel; because*

*I will do this to thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.* Ver. 13. *For, behold, He that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and maketh known to man what is his thought; who maketh dawn, darkness, and goeth over the high places of the earth, Jehovah God of hosts is His name.*" The punishment which God is now about to inflict is introduced with *lākhēn* (therefore). *כֹּה אֵנִי עֹשֶׂה* cannot point back to the punishment threatened in vers. 2, 3, and still less to the chastisements mentioned in vers. 6–11; for *lākhēn kōh* is always used by Amos to introduce what is about to ensue, and any retrospective allusion to vers. 6–11 is precluded by the future *אֵנִי עֹשֶׂה*. What Jehovah is now about to do is not expressed here *more iratorum*, but may clearly be discerned from what follows. "When He has said, '*This will I do to thee,*' He is silent as to what He will do, in order that, whilst Israel is left in uncertainty as to the particular kind of punishment (which is all the more terrible because all kinds of things are imagined), it may repent of its sins, and so avert the things which God threatens here" (Jerome). Instead of an announcement of the punishment, there follows in the words, "Because I will do this to thee (*כֹּה* pointing back to *כֹּה*), prepare to meet thy God," a summons to hold themselves in readiness *liqra' th 'ēlohīm* (in occursum Dei), i.e. to stand before God thy judge. The meaning of this summons has been correctly explained by Calvin thus: "When thou seest that thou hast resorted in vain to all kinds of subterfuges, since thou never wilt be able to escape from the hand of thy judge; see now at length that thou dost avert this last destruction which is hanging over thee." But this can only be effected "by true renewal of heart, in which men are dissatisfied with themselves, and submit with changed heart to God, and come as suppliants, praying for forgiveness." For if we judge ourselves, we shall not be judged by the Lord (1 Cor. xi. 31). This view is shown to be the correct one, by the repeated admonitions to seek the Lord and live (ch. v. 4, 6; cf. ver. 14). To give all the greater emphasis to this command, Amos depicts God in ver. 13 as the Almighty and Omniscient, who creates prosperity and adversity. The predicates applied to God are to be regarded as explanations of *אֵלֹהִים*, prepare to meet thy God; for it is He who formeth mountains, etc., i.e. the Almighty, and also He who maketh known to man *מִה שֶׁחָשָׁהוּ*, what man thinketh, not

what God thinketh, since  $\text{שֶׁי} = \text{שֶׁי}$  is not applicable to God, and is only used ironically of Baal in 1 Kings xviii. 27. The thought is this: God is the searcher of the heart (Jer. xvii. 10; Ps. cxxxix. 2), and reveals to men by prophets the state of their heart, since He judges not only the outward actions, but the inmost emotions of the heart (cf. Heb. iv. 12).  $\text{עֵשָׂה שָׁחַר עֵיפָה}$  might mean, He turns morning dawn into darkness, since  $\text{עֵשָׂה}$  may be construed with the accusative of that into which anything is made (compare Ex. xxx. 25, and the similar thought in ch. v. 8, that God darkens the day into night). But both of these arguments simply prove the possibility of this explanation, not that it is either necessary or correct. As a rule, where  $\text{עֵשָׂה}$  occurs, the thing into which anything is made is introduced with  $\text{לְ}$  (cf. Gen. xii. 2; Ex. xxxii. 10). Here, therefore,  $\text{לְ}$  may be omitted, simply to avoid ambiguity. For these reasons we agree with Calvin and others, who take the words as asyndeton. God makes morning-dawn and darkness, which is more suitable to a description of the creative omnipotence of God; and the omission of the *Vav* may be explained very simply from the oratorical character of the prophecy. To this there is appended the last statement: He passes along over the high places of the earth, *i.e.* He rules the earth with unlimited omnipotence (see at Deut. xxxii. 13), and manifests Himself thereby as the God of the universe, or God of hosts.

#### THE OVERTHROW OF THE KINGDOM OF THE TEN TRIBES.—

#### CHAP. V. AND VI.

The elegy, which the prophet commences in ver. 2, upon the fall of the daughter of Israel, forms the theme of the admonitory addresses in these two chapters. These addresses, which are divided into four parts by the admonitions, "Seek Jehovah, and live," in vers. 4 and 6, "Seek good" in ver. 14, and the two woes (*hōi*) in ch. v. 18 and vi. 1, have no other purpose than this, to impress upon the people of God the impossibility of averting the threatened destruction, and to take away from the self-secure sinners the false foundations of their trust, by setting the demands of God before them once more. In every one of these sections, therefore, the proclamation of

the judgment returns again, and that in a form of greater and greater intensity, till it reaches to the banishment of the whole nation, and the overthrow of Samaria and the kingdom (ch. v. 27, vi. 8 sqq.).

Vers. 1-3. The Elegy.—Ver. 1. "*Hear ye this word, which I raise over you; a lamentation, O house of Israel.*" Ver. 2. *The virgin Israel is fallen; she does not rise up again; cast down upon her soil; no one sets her up.* Ver. 3. *For thus saith the Lord Jehovah, The city that goes out by a thousand will retain a hundred, and that which goes out by a hundred will retain ten, for the house of Israel.*" הַיְּדֻבָּר הַזֶּה is still further defined in the relative clause 'אֲשֶׁר וְנָא as קִינָה, a mournful song, lit. a lamentation or dirge for one who is dead (cf. 2 Sam. i. 17; 2 Chron. xxxv. 25). אֲשֶׁר is a relative pronoun, not a conjunction (for); and קִינָה is an explanatory apposition: which I raise or commence as (or "namely") a lamentation. "House of Israel" is synonymous with "house of Joseph" (ver. 6), hence Israel of the ten tribes. The lamentation follows in ver. 2, showing itself to be a song by the rhythm and by its poetical form. נָפַל, to fall, denotes a violent death (2 Sam. i. 19, 25), and is here a figure used to denote the overthrow or destruction of the kingdom. The expression virgin Israel (an epexegetical genitive, not "of Israel") rests upon a poetical personification of the population of a city or of a kingdom, as a daughter, and wherever the further idea of being unconquered is added, as a virgin (see at Isa. xxiii. 12). Here, too, the term "virgin" is used to indicate the contrast between the overthrow predicted and the original destination of Israel, as the people of God, to be unconquered by any heathen nation whatever. The second clause of the verse strengthens the first. נִפְּשׁ, to be stretched out or cast down, describes the fall as a violent overthrow. The third verse does not form part of the lamentation, but gives a brief, cursory vindication of it by the announcement that Israel will perish in war, even to a very small remnant. מִלְּחָמָה refers to their marching out to war, and מִלְּחָמָה is subordinated to it, as a more precise definition of the manner in which they marched out (cf. Ewald, § 279, b).

Vers. 4-12. The short, cursory explanation of the reason for the lamentation opened here, is followed in vers. 4 sqq. by the more elaborate proof, that Israel has deserved to be destroyed,

because it has done the very opposite of what God demands of His people. God requires that they should seek Him, and forsake idolatry, in order to live (vers. 4-6); but Israel, on the contrary, turns right into unrighteousness, without fearing the almighty God and His judgment (vers. 7-9). This unrighteousness God must punish (vers. 10-12). Ver. 4. *"For thus saith Jehovah to the house of Israel, Seek ye me, and live."* Ver. 5. *"And seek not Bethel, and come not to Gilgal, and go not over to Beersheba: for Gilgal repays it with captivity, and Bethel comes to nought."* Ver. 6. *"Seek Jehovah, and live; that He fall not upon the house of Joseph like fire, and it devour, and there be none to quench it for Bethel."* The *kī* in ver. 4 is co-ordinate to that in ver. 3, "Seek me, and live," for "Seek me, so shall ye live." For this meaning of two imperatives, following directly the one upon the other, see Gesenius, § 130, 2, and Ewald, § 347, *b*. הָיָה, not merely to remain alive, not to perish, but to obtain possession of true life. God can only be sought, however, in His revelation, or in the manner in which He wishes to be sought and worshipped. This explains the antithesis, "Seek not Bethel," etc. In addition to Bethel and Gilgal (see at ch. iv. 4), Beersheba, which was in the southern part of Judah, is also mentioned here, being the place where Abraham had called upon the Lord (Gen. xxi. 33), and where the Lord had appeared to Isaac and Jacob (Gen. xxvi. 24 and xli. 1; see also at Gen. xxi. 31). These sacred reminiscences from the olden time had caused Beersheba to be made into a place of idolatrous worship, to which the Israelites went on pilgrimage beyond the border of their own kingdom (עֵבֶר). But visiting these idolatrous places of worship did no good, for the places themselves would be given up to destruction. Gilgal would wander into *captivity* (an expression used here on account of the similarity in the ring of גִּלְגָל and גִּלְגָל). Bethel would become *'âven*, that is to say, not "an idol" here, but "nothingness," though there is an allusion to the change of *Beth-el* (God's house) into *Beth-'âven* (an idol-house; see at Hos. iv. 15). The Judæan Beersheba is passed over in the threat, because the primary intention of Amos is simply to predict the destruction of the kingdom of the ten tribes. After this warning the prophet repeats the exhortation to seek Jehovah, and adds this threatening, "that Jehovah come not like fire upon the house

of Joseph" (*tsálach*, generally construed with 'al or 'el, cf. Judg. xiv. 19, xv. 14, 1 Sam. x. 6; here with an accusative, to fall upon a person), "and it (the fire) devour, without there being any to extinguish it for Bethel." Bethel, as the chief place of worship in Israel, is mentioned here for the kingdom itself, which is called the "house of Joseph," from Joseph the father of Ephraim, the most powerful tribe in that kingdom.

To add force to this warning, Amos (vers. 7-9) exhibits the moral corruption of the Israelites, in contrast with the omnipotence of Jehovah as it manifests itself in terrible judgments. Ver. 7. *"They that change right into wormwood, and bring righteousness down to the earth."* Ver. 8. *"He that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into morning, and darkeneth day to night: that calleth to the waters of the sea, and poureth them over the surface of the earth; Jehovah is His name."* Ver. 9. *"Who causeth desolation to flash upon the strong, and desolation cometh upon the fortress."* The sentences in vers. 7 and 8 are written without any connecting link. The participle in ver. 7 cannot be taken as an address, for it is carried on in the third person (*hinnāchū*), not in the second. And *hahōph'khīm* (who turn) cannot be in apposition to *Beth-el*, since the latter refers not to the inhabitants, but to the houses. As Amos is generally fond of a participial construction (cf. ch. ii. 7, iv. 13), so in a spirited address he likes to utter the thoughts one after another without any logical link of connection. As a matter of fact, *hahōph'khīm* is connected with *bēth-yōsēph* (the house of Joseph), "Seek the Lord, ye of the house of Joseph, who turn right into wrong;" but instead of this connection, he proceeds with a simple description, "They are turning," etc. *Lā'ānāh*, wormwood, a bitter plant, is a figurative term denoting bitter wrong (cf. ch. vi. 12), the actions of men being regarded, according to Deut. xxix. 17, as the fruits of their state of mind. Laying righteousness on the ground (*hinnāch* from *nūach*) answers to our "trampling under feet." Hitzig has correctly explained the train of thought in vers. 7 and 8: "They do this, whereas Jehovah is the Almighty, and can bring destruction suddenly upon them." To show this antithesis, the article which takes the place of the relative is omitted from the participles 'ōsēh and hōphēkh. The description of the divine omnipotence com-

mences with the creation of the brightly shining stars; then follow manifestations of this omnipotence, which are repeated in the government of the world. *Kimâh*, lit. the crowd, is the group of seven stars, the constellation of the Pleiades. *K'sîl*, the gate, according to the ancient versions the giant, is the constellation of Orion. The two are mentioned together in Job ix. 9 and xxxviii. 31 (see Delitzsch on the latter). And He also turns the darkest night into morning, and darkens the day into night again. These words refer to the regular interchange of day and night; for *tsalmâveth*, the shadow of death, i.e. thick darkness, never denotes the regularly recurring gloominess of night, but the appalling gloom of night (Job xxiv. 17), more especially of the night of death (Job iii. 5, x. 21, 22, xxxviii. 17; Ps. xlv. 20), the unlighted depth of the heart of the earth (Job xxviii. 3), the darkness of the prison (Ps. cvii. 10, 14), also of wickedness (Job xii. 22, xxxiv. 22), of sufferings (Job xvi. 16; Jer. xiii. 16; Ps. xxiii. 4), and of spiritual misery (Isa. ix. 1). Consequently the words point to the judicial rule of the Almighty in the world. As the Almighty turns the darkness of death into light, and the deepest misery into prosperity and health,<sup>1</sup> so He darkens the bright day of prosperity into the dark night of adversity, and calls to the waters of the sea to pour themselves over the earth like the flood, and to destroy the ungodly. The idea that by the waters of the sea, which pour themselves out at the call of God over the surface of the earth, we are to understand the moisture which rises from the sea and then falls upon the earth as rain, no more answers to the words themselves, than the idea expressed by Hitzig, that they refer to the water of the rivers and brooks, which flow out of the sea as well as into it (Eccles. i. 7). The words suggest the thought of terrible inundations of the earth by the swelling of the sea, and the allusion to the judgment of the flood can hardly be overlooked. This judicial act of the Almighty, no strong man and no fortress can defy. With the swiftness of lightning He causes desolation to smite the strong man. *Bâlag*, lit. *micare*, used in the Arabic to denote the

<sup>1</sup> Theodoret has given a correct explanation, though he does not quite exhaust the force of the words: "It is easy for Him to turn even the greatest dangers into happiness; for by the shadow of death he means great dangers. And it is also easy to bring calamity upon those who are in prosperity."



lighting up of the rays of the dawn, *hiphil* to cause to light up, is applied here to motion with the swiftness of lightning; it is also employed in a purely metaphorical sense for the lighting up of the countenance (Ps. xxxix. 14; Job ix. 27, x. 20). In ver. 9b the address is continued in a descriptive form; יָבֹא has not a causative meaning. The two clauses of this verse point to the fate which awaits the Israelites who trust in their strength and their fortifications (ch. vi. 13). And yet they persist in unrighteousness.

Ver. 10. "*They hate the monitor in the gate, and abhor him that speaketh uprightly.* Ver. 11. *Therefore, because ye tread upon the poor, and take the distribution of corn from him, ye have built houses of square stones, and will not dwell therein; planted pleasant vineyards, and will not drink their wine.* Ver. 12. *For I know how many are your transgressions, and how great your sins; oppressing the righteous, taking atonement money; and ye bow down the poor in the gate.*" However natural it may seem to take מוֹכִיחַ and דִּבֵּר חָמִים in ver. 10 as referring to prophets, who charge the ungodly with their acts of unrighteousness, as Jerome does, this explanation is precluded not only by *bassha'ar* (in the gate), since the gate was not the meeting-place of the people where the prophets were accustomed to stand, but the place where courts of judgment were held, and all the public affairs of the community discussed (see at Deut. xxi. 19); but also by the first half of ver. 11, which presupposes judicial proceedings. *Möklhäch* is not merely the judge who puts down unjust accusers, but any one who lifts up his voice in a court of justice against acts of injustice (as in Isa. xxix. 21). דִּבֵּר חָמִים, he who says what is blameless, i.e. what is right and true: this is to be taken generally, and not to be restricted to the accused who seeks to defend his innocence. חָעֵב is a stronger expression than שָׁנֵא. The punishment for this unjust oppression of the poor will be the withdrawal of their possessions. The ἀπ. λεγ. *bōshēs* is a dialectically different form for בּוֹסֵס, from בָּסַם, to trample down (Rashi, Kimchi), analogous to the interchange of שָׁרִיף and סָרִיף, a coat of mail, although as a rule שׁ passes into ס, and not ס into שׁ. For the derivation from בָּשַׁם, according to which בּוֹשֵׁם would stand for בּוֹשֵׁשׁ (Hitzig and Tuch on Gen. p. 85), is opposed both to the construction with עַל, and also to the circumstance that בּוֹשֵׁשׁ means to delay (Ex. xxxii. 1;

Judg. v. 28) ; and the derivation suggested by Hitzig from an Arabic verb, signifying to carry one's self haughtily towards others, is a mere loophole. Taking a gift of corn from the poor refers to unjust extortion on the part of the judge, who will only do justice to a poor man when he is paid for it. The main clause, which was introduced with *lākhēn*, is continued with *בָּתֵּי יָוֵיתָ* : "thus have ye built houses of square stones, and shall not dwell therein;" for "ye shall not dwell in the houses of square stones which ye have built." The threat is taken from Deut. xxviii. 30, 39, and sets before them the plundering of the land and the banishment of the people. Houses built of square stones are splendid buildings (see Isa. ix. 9). The reason for this threat is given in ver. 12, where reference is made to the multitude and magnitude of the sins, of which injustice in the administration of justice is again held up as the chief sin. The participles *לִקְחֵי* and *צָרְרֵי* are attached to the suffixes of *פְּשָׁעֵיכֶם* and *חַפְּזֵיכֶם* : *your sins*, who oppress the righteous, attack him, and take atonement money, contrary to the express command of the law in Num. xxxv. 31, to take no *kōpher* for the soul of a murderer. The judges allowed the rich murderer to purchase exemption from capital punishment by the payment of atonement money, whilst they bowed down the right of the poor. Observe the transition from the participle to the third person fem., by which the prophet turns away with disgust from these ungodly judges. Bowing down the poor is a concise expression for bowing down the right of the poor: compare ch. ii. 7 and the warnings against this sin (Ex. xxiii. 6 ; Deut. xvi. 19).

Vers. 13–17. With the new turn that all talking is useless, Amos repeats the admonition to seek good and hate evil, if they would live and obtain favour with God (vers. 13–15) ; and then appends the threat that deep mourning will arise on every hand, since God is drawing near to judgment. Ver. 13. "*Therefore, whoever has prudence at this time is silent, for it is an evil time.*" As *lākhēn* (therefore) always introduces the threatening of divine punishment after the exposure of the sins (cf. vers. 11, 16, ch. vi. 7, iv. 12, iii. 11), we might be disposed to connect ver. 13 with the preceding verse ; but the contents of the verse require that it should be taken in connection with what follows, so that *lākhēn* simply denotes the close connection

of the two turns of speech, *i.e.* indicates that the new command in vers. 14, 15 is a consequence of the previous warnings. *Hammaskil*, the prudent man, he who acts wisely, is silent. *בְּעֵת הַזֶּה*, at a time such as this is, because it is an evil time, not however "a dangerous time to speak, on account of the malignity of those in power," but a time of moral corruption, in which all speaking and warning are of no avail. It is opposed to the context to refer *בְּעֵת הַזֶּה* to the future, *i.e.* to the time when God will come to punish, in which case the silence would be equivalent to not murmuring against God (Rashi and others). At the same time, love to his people, and zeal for their deliverance, impel the prophet to repeat his call to them to return.

Ver. 14. "*Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live; and so Jehovah the God of hosts may be with you, as ye say.*" Ver. 15. "*Hate evil, and love good, and set up justice in the gate; perhaps Jehovah the God of hosts will show favour to the remnant of Joseph.*" The command to seek and love good is practically the same as that to seek the Lord in vers. 4, 6; and therefore the promise is the same, "that ye may live." But it is only in fellowship with God that man has life. This truth the Israelites laid hold of in a perfectly outward sense, fancying that they stood in fellowship with God by virtue of their outward connection with the covenant nation as sons of Israel or Abraham (cf. John viii. 39), and that the threatened judgment could not reach them, but that God would deliver them in every time of oppression by the heathen (cf. Mic. iii. 11; Jer. vii. 10). Amos meets this delusion with the remark, "that Jehovah may be so with you as ye say." *כִּי* neither means "in case ye do so" (Rashi, Baur), nor "in like manner as, *i.e.* if ye strive after good" (Hitzig). Neither of these meanings can be established, and here they are untenable, for the simple reason that *כִּי* unmistakeably corresponds with the following *כַּאֲשֶׁר*. It means nothing more than "so as ye say." The thought is the following: "Seek good, and not evil: then will Jehovah the God of the heavenly hosts be with you as a helper in distress, so as ye say." This implied that in their present condition, so long as they sought good, they ought not to comfort themselves with the certainty of Jehovah's help. Seeking good is explained in ver. 15 as loving good, and this is still further defined as setting up justice in the gate, *i.e.* maintaining

a righteous administration of justice at the place of judgment; and to this the hope, so humiliating to carnal security, is attached: perhaps God will then show favour to the remnant of the people. The emphasis in these words is laid as much upon *perhaps* as upon the remnant of Joseph. The expression "*perhaps* He will show favour" indicates that the measure of Israel's sins was full, and no deliverance could be hoped for if God were to proceed to act according to His righteousness. The "remnant of Joseph" does not refer to "the existing condition of the ten tribes" (Ros., Hitzig). For although Hazael and Benhadad had conquered the whole of the land of Gilead in the times of Jehu and Jehoahaz, and had annihilated the Israelitish army with the exception of a very small remnant (2 Kings x. 32, 33, xiii. 3, 7), Joash and Jeroboam II. had recovered from the Syrians all the conquered territory, and restored the kingdom to its original bounds (2 Kings xiii. 23 sqq., xiv. 26-28). Consequently Amos could not possibly describe the state of the kingdom of the ten tribes in the time of Jeroboam II. as "the remnant of Joseph." As the Syrians had not attempted any deportation, the nation of the ten tribes during the reign of Jeroboam was still, or was once more, all Israel. If, therefore, Amos merely holds out the possibility of the favouring of the remnant of Joseph, he thereby gives distinctly to understand, that in the approaching judgment Israel will perish with the exception of a remnant, which may possibly be preserved after the great chastisement (cf. ver. 3), just as Joel (iii. 5) and Isaiah (vi. 13, x. 21-23) promise only the salvation of a remnant to the kingdom of Judah.

This judgment is announced in vers. 16, 17. Ver. 16. "*Therefore thus saith Jehovah the God of hosts, the Lord: In all roads lamentation! and in all streets will men say, Alas! alas! and they call the husbandman to mourning, and lamentation to those skilled in lamenting.*" Ver. 17. "*And in all vineyards lamentation, because I go through the midst of thee, saith Jehovah.*" *Lákhên* (therefore) is not connected with the admonitions in vers. 14, 15, nor can it point back to the reproaches in vers. 7, 10-12, since they are too far off: it rather links on to the substance of ver. 13, which involves the thought that all admonition to return is fruitless, and the ungodly still persist in their unrighteousness,—a thought which also forms the back-

ground of vers. 14, 15. The meaning of vers. 16, 17 is, that mourning and lamentation for the dead will fill both city and land. On every hand will there be dead to weep for, because Jehovah will go judging through the land. The roads and streets are not merely those of the capital, although these are primarily to be thought of, but those of all the towns in the kingdom. *Mispēd* is the death-wail. This is evident from the parallel *'amar hō hō*, saying, Alas, alas! *i.e.* striking up the death-wail (cf. Jer. xxii. 18). And this death-wail will not be heard in all the streets of the towns only, but the husbandman will also be called from the field to mourn, *i.e.* to weep for one who has died in his house. The verb קָרָא, they call, belongs to קָרָא אֶל, they call lamentation to those skilled in mourning: for they call out the word *mispēd* to the professional mourners; in other words, they send for them to strike up their wailing for the dead. יָדְעֵי נְהִי (those skilled in mourning) are the public wailing women, who were hired when a death occurred to sing mourning songs (compare Jer. ix. 16, Matt. ix. 23, and my *Bibl. Archäologie*, ii. p. 105). Even in all the vineyards, the places where rejoicing is generally looked for (ver. 11; Isa. xvi. 10), the death-wail will be heard. Ver. 17b mentions the event which occasions the lamentation everywhere. וְאֵי, for (not "if") I go through the midst of thee. These words are easily explained from Ex. xii. 12, from which Amos has taken them. Jehovah there says to Moses, "I pass through the land of Egypt, and smite all the first-born." And just as the Lord once passed through Egypt, so will He now pass judicially through Israel, and slay the ungodly. For Israel is no longer the nation of the covenant, which He passes over and spares (ch. vii. 8, viii. 2), but has become an Egypt, which He will pass through as a judge to punish it. This threat is carried out still further in the next two sections, commencing with *hōi*.

Vers. 18-27. The first turn.—Ver. 18. "*Woe to those who desire the day of Jehovah! What good is the day of Jehovah to you? It is darkness, and not light.*" Ver. 19. "*As if a man fleeth before the lion, and the bear meets him; and he comes into the house, and rests his hand upon the wall, and the snake bites him.*" Ver. 20. "*Alas! is not the day of Jehovah darkness, and not light; and gloom, and no brightness in it?*" As the Israelites

rested their hope of deliverance from every kind of hostile oppression upon their outward connection with the covenant nation (ver. 14); many wished the day to come, on which Jehovah would judge all the heathen, and redeem Israel out of all distress, and exalt it to might and dominion above all nations, and bless it with honour and glory, applying the prophecy of Joel in ch. iii. without the least reserve to Israel as the nation of Jehovah, and without considering that, according to Joel ii. 32, those only would be saved on the day of Jehovah who called upon the name of the Lord, and were called by the Lord, *i.e.* were acknowledged by the Lord as His own. These infatuated hopes, which confirmed the nation in the security of its life of sin, are met by Amos with an exclamation of woe upon those who long for the day of Jehovah to come, and with the declaration explanatory of the woe, that that day is darkness and not light, and will bring them nothing but harm and destruction, and not prosperity and salvation. He explains this in ver. 19 by a figure taken from life. To those who wish the day of Jehovah to come, the same thing will happen as to a man who, when fleeing from a lion, meets a bear, etc. The meaning is perfectly clear: whoever would escape one danger, falls into a second; and whoever escapes this, falls into a third, and perishes therein. The serpent's bite in the hand is fatal. "In that day every place is full of danger and death; neither in-doors nor out-of-doors is any one safe: for out-of-doors lions and bears prowl about, and in-doors snakes lie hidden, even in the holes of the walls" (C. a. Lap.). After this figurative indication of the sufferings and calamities which the day of the Lord will bring, Amos once more repeats in ver. 20, in a still more emphatic manner (אֲשֶׁר, *nonne* = assuredly), that it will be no day of salvation, *sc.* to those who seek evil and not good, and trample justice and righteousness under foot (vers. 14, 15).

This threatening judgment will not be averted by the Israelites, even by their feasts and sacrifices (vers. 21, 22). The Lord has no pleasure in the feasts which they celebrate. Their outward, heartless worship, does not make them into the people of God, who can count upon His grace. Ver. 21. "*I hate, I despise your feasts, and do not like to smell your holy days.*" Ver. 22. "*For if ye offer me burnt-offerings, and your*"

meat-offerings, I have no pleasure therein; and the thank-offering of your fattened calves I do not regard. Ver. 23. Put away from me the noise of thy songs; and I do not like to hear the playing of thy harps. Ver. 24. And let judgment roll like water, and righteousness like an inexhaustible stream." By the rejection of the *opus operatum* of the feasts and sacrifices, the roots are cut away from the false reliance of the Israelites upon their connection with the people of God. The combination of the words שְׂנֵאתִי מִזְבְּחֵי expresses in the strongest terms the dislike of God to the feasts of those who were at enmity with Him. *Chaggim* are the great annual feasts; 'atsârôth, the meetings for worship at those feasts, inasmuch as a holy meeting took place at the 'atsereth of the feast of Passover and feast of Tabernacles (see at Lev. xxiii. 36). *Rîäch*, to smell, is an expression of satisfaction, with an allusion to the יִיחֹם רִיחַ, which ascended to God from the burning sacrifice (see Lev. xxvi. 31). *Kî*, in ver. 22, is explanatory: "for," not "yea." The observance of the feast culminated in the sacrifices. God did not like the feasts, because He had no pleasure in the sacrifices. In ver. 23a the two kinds of sacrifice, 'olâh and minchâh, are divided between the protasis and apodosis, which gives rise to a certain incongruity. The sentences, if written fully, would read thus: When ye offer me burnt-offerings and meat-offerings, I have no pleasure in your burnt-offerings and meat-offerings. To these two kinds the *shelem*, the health-offering or peace-offering, is added as a third class in ver. 22b. כְּרִימִים, fattened things, generally mentioned along with *bâqâr* as one particular species, for fattened calves (see Isa. i. 11). In הָיָה (ver. 23) Israel is addressed as a whole. הַמִּזְמֹר שְׁרִיד, the noise of thy songs, answers to the strong expression הָיָה. The singing of their psalms is nothing more to God than a wearisome noise, which is to be brought to an end. Singing and playing upon harps formed part of the temple worship (*vid.* 1 Chron. xvi. 40, xxiii. 5, and xxv.). Isaiah (Isa. i. 11 sqq.) also refuses the heartless sacrifice and worship of the people, who have fallen away from God in their hearts. It is very clear from the sentence which Amos pronounces here, that the worship at Bethel was an imitation of the temple service at Jerusalem. If, therefore, with ch. vi. 1 in view, where the careless upon Mount Zion and in Samaria are addressed, we are warranted in assuming that

here also the prophet has the worship in Judah in his mind as well; the words apply primarily and chiefly to the worship of the kingdom of the ten tribes, and therefore even in that case they prove that, with regard to ritual, it was based upon the model of the temple service at Jerusalem. Because the Lord has no pleasure in this hypocritical worship, the judgment shall pour like a flood over the land. The meaning of ver. 24 is not, "Let justice and righteousness take the place of your sacrifices." *Mishpât* is not the justice to be practised by men; for "although Jehovah might promise that He would create righteousness in the nation, so that it would fill the land as it were like a flood (Isa. xi. 9), He only demands righteousness generally, and not actually in floods" (Hitzig). Still less can *mishpât ûts'dâqâh* be understood as relating to the righteousness of the gospel which Christ has revealed. This thought is a very far-fetched one here, and is only founded upon the rendering given to *לִשְׁפָּט*, *et revelabitur* (Targ., Jerome, = *לִשְׁפָּט*), whereas *לִשְׁפָּט* comes from *לָשַׁט*, to roll, to roll along. The verse is to be explained according to Isa. x. 22, and threatens the flooding of the land with judgment and the punitive righteousness of God (Theod. Mops., Theodoret, Cyr., Kimchi, and others).

Their heartless worship would not arrest the flood of divine judgments, since Israel had from time immemorial been addicted to idolatry. Ver. 25. "*Have ye offered me sacrifices and gifts in the desert forty years, O house of Israel?*" Ver. 26. "*But have ye borne the booth of your king and the pedestal of your images, the star of your gods, which ye made for yourselves?*" Ver. 27. "*Then I will carry you beyond Damascus, saith Jehovah; God of hosts is His name.*" The connection between these verses and what precedes is explained by Hengstenberg thus: "All this (the acts of worship enumerated in vers. 21-23) can no more be called a true worship, than the open idolatry in the wilderness. Therefore (ver. 17) as in that instance the outwardly idolatrous people did not tread the holy land, so now will the inwardly idolatrous people be driven out of the holy land" (*Dissertations on the Pentateuch*, vol. i. p. 157 transl.). But if this were the train of thought, the prophet would not have omitted all reference to the punishment of the idolatrous people in the wilderness. And as there is no such allusion here, it is more natural to take vers. 25 and 26, as Calvin does,



and regard the reference to the idolatry of the people, which was practised even in the wilderness, as assigning a further reason for their exposure to punishment.<sup>1</sup> The question, "Have ye offered me sacrifices?" is equivalent to a denial, and the words apply to the nation as a whole, or the great mass of the people, individual exceptions being passed by. The *forty* years are used as a round number, to denote the time during which the people were sentenced to die in the wilderness after the rebellion at Kadesh, just as in Num. xiv. 33, 34, and Josh. v. 6, where this time, which actually amounted to only thirty-eight years, is given, as it is here, as forty years. And "the prophet could speak all the more naturally of forty years, since the germ of apostasy already existed in the great mass of the people, even when they still continued outwardly to maintain their fidelity to the God of Israel" (Hengstenberg). During that time even the circumcision of the children born in the thirty-eight years was suspended (see at Josh. v. 5-7), and the sacrificial worship prescribed by the law fell more and more into disuse, so that the generation that was sentenced to die out offered no more sacrifices. *Z'bhâchîm* (slain-offerings) and *min-châh* (meat-offerings), *i.e.* bleeding and bloodless sacrifices, are mentioned here as the two principal kinds, to denote sacrifices of all kinds. We cannot infer from this that the daily sacrificial worship was entirely suspended: in Num. xvii. 11, indeed, the altar-fire is actually mentioned, and the daily sacrifice assumed to be still in existence; at the same time, the event there referred to belonged to the time immediately succeeding the passing of the sentence upon the people. Amos mentions the omission of the sacrifices, however, not as an evidence that the blessings which the Lord had conferred upon the people were not to be attributed to the sacrifices they had offered to Him,

<sup>1</sup> "In this place," says Calvin, "the prophet proves more clearly, that he is not merely reproving hypocrisy among the Israelites, or the fact that they only obtruded their external pomps upon the notice of God, without any true piety of heart, but he also condemns their departure from the precepts of the law. And he shows that this was not a new disease among the Israelitish people, since their fathers had mixed up such leaven as this with the worship of God from the very beginning, and had thereby corrupted that worship. He therefore shows that the Israelites had always been addicted to superstitions, and could not be kept in any way whatever to the true and innate worship of God."

as Ephraem Syrus supposes, nor to support the assertion that God does not need or wish for their worship, for which Hitzig appeals to Jer. vii. 22; but as a proof that from time immemorial Israel has acted faithlessly towards its God, in adducing which he comprehends all the different generations of the people in the unity of the house of Israel, because the existing generation resembled the contemporaries of Moses in character and conduct. Ver. 26 is attached in an adversative sense: "To me (Jehovah) ye have offered no sacrifices, but ye have borne," etc. The opposition between the Jehovah-worship which they suspended, and the idol-worship which they carried on, is so clearly expressed in the verbs **הִנֵּשְׁתֶּם** and **נִשְׁאַתֶּם**, which correspond to one another, that the idea is precluded at once as altogether untenable, that "ver. 26 refers to either the present or future in the form of an inference drawn from the preceding verse: therefore do ye (or shall ye) carry the hut of your king," etc. Moreover, the idea of the idols being carried into captivity, which would be the meaning of **נִשְׂאָה** in that case, is utterly foreign to the prophetic range of thought. It is not those who go into captivity who carry their gods away with them; but the gods of a vanquished nation are carried away by the conquerors (Isa. xli. 1). To give a correct interpretation to this difficult verse, which has been explained in various ways from the very earliest times, it is necessary, above all things, to bear in mind the parallelism of the clauses. Whereas in the first half of the verse the two objects are connected together by the copula **וְ** (**וְיָאֵת**), the omission of both **יָאֵת** and the copula **וְ** before **בְּכֹכְבֵי אֱלֹהֵיכֶם** indicates most obviously that **בְּכֹכְבֵי אֱלֹהֵיכֶם** does not introduce a third object in addition to the two preceding ones, but rather that the intention is to define those objects more precisely; from which it follows still further, that **סִכּוֹת מַלְכֵיכֶם** and **בֵּית צִלְמֵיכֶם** do not denote two different kinds of idolatry, but simply two different forms of the very same idolatry. The two **ἀπ. λεγ. sikkūth** and **kiyyūn** are undoubtedly appellatives, notwithstanding the fact that the ancient versions have taken **kiyyūn** as the proper name of a deity. This is required by the parallelism of the members; for **צִלְמֵיכֶם** stands in the same relation to **בֵּית** as **מַלְכֵיכֶם** to **סִכּוֹת**. The plural **צִלְמֵיכֶם**, however, cannot be in apposition to the singular **בֵּית** (**kiyyūn**, your images), but must be a genitive governed by it: "the

*kiyyān* of your images." And in the same way מלכב is the genitive after סכות: "the *sikkūth* of your king." *Sikkūth* has been taken in an appellative sense by all the ancient translators. The LXX. and Symm. render it *τῆς σκητῆς*; the Peshito, Jerome, and the Ar. *tentorium*. The Chaldee has retained *sikkūth*. The rendering adopted by Aquila, *συσκασμός*, is etymologically the more exact; for *sikkūth*, from סָכַף, to shade, signifies a shade or shelter, hence a covering, a booth, and is not to be explained either from *sākhath*, to be silent, from which Hitzig deduces the meaning "block," or from the Syriac and Chaldee word סכר, a nail or stake, as Rosenmüller and Ewald suppose. כִּיָּן, from כָּן, is related to כָּן, *basis* (Ex. xxx. 18), and מְכוּנָה, and signifies a pedestal or framework. The correctness of the Masoretic pointing of the word is attested by the *kiyyān* of the Chaldee, and also by צְלָמֵיכֶם, inasmuch as the reading כִּיָּן, which is given in the LXX. and Syr., requires the singular צְלָמְכֶם, which is also given in the Syriac. צְלָמִים are images of gods, as in Num. xxxiii. 52, 2 Kings xi. 18. The words כּוֹכַב אֱלֹהֵיכֶם which follow are indeed also governed by נִשְׁאָחָם; but, as the omission of וְאֵת clearly shows, the connection is only a loose one, so that it is rather to be regarded as in apposition to the preceding objects in the sense of "namely, the star of your god;" and there is no necessity to alter the pointing, as Hitzig proposes, and read כּוֹכַב, "a star was your god," although this rendering expresses the sense quite correctly. כּוֹכַב אֱלֹהֵיכֶם is equivalent to the star, which is your god, which ye worship as your god (for this use of the construct state, see Ges. § 116, 5). By the star we have to picture to ourselves not a star formed by human hand as a representation of the god, nor an image of a god with the figure of a star upon its head, like those found upon the Ninevite sculptures (see Layard). For if this had been what Amos meant, he would have repeated the particle וְאֵת before כּוֹכַב. The thought is therefore the following: the king whose booth, and the images whose stand they carried, were a star which they had made their god, i.e. a star-deity (אֱשֶׁר refers to אֱלֹהֵיכֶם, not to כּוֹכַב). This star-god, which they worshipped as their king, they had embodied in *ts'lamim*. The booth and the stand were the things used for protecting and carrying the images of the star-god. *Sikkūth* was no doubt a portable shrine, in which the

image of the deity was kept. Such shrines (*ναοί, ναῖσκοι*) were used by the Egyptians, according to Herodotus (ii. 63) and Diodorus Sic. (i. 97): they were "small chapels, generally gilded and ornamented with flowers and in other ways, intended to hold a small idol when processions were made, and to be carried or driven about with it" (Drumann, *On the Rosetta Inscription*, p. 211). The stand on which the chapel was placed during these processions was called *παστοφόριον* (Drumann, p. 212); the bearers were called *ἱεραφόροι* or *παστοφόροι* (D. p. 226). This Egyptian custom explains the prophet's words: "the hut of your king, and the stand of your images," as Hengstenberg has shown in his *Dissertations on the Penta-teuch*, vol. i. p. 161), and points to Egypt as the source of the idolatry condemned by Amos. This is also favoured by the fact, that the golden calf which the Israelites worshipped at Sinai was an imitation of the idolatry of Egypt; also by the testimony of the prophet Ezekiel (ch. xx. 7 sqq.), to the effect that the Israelites did not desist even in the wilderness from the abominations of their eyes, namely the idols of Egypt; and lastly, by the circumstance that the idea of there being any allusion in the words to the worship of Moloch or Saturn is altogether irreconcilable with the Hebrew text, and cannot be historically sustained,<sup>1</sup> whereas star-worship, or at any rate the

<sup>1</sup> This explanation of the words is simply founded upon the rendering of the LXX.: *καὶ ἀνελάβετε τὴν σκηνὴν τοῦ Μολόχ καὶ τὸ ἄστρον τοῦ Θεοῦ ὑμῶν Ραιφάν, τοὺς τύπους οὓς ἐποιήσατε ἑαυτοῖς*. These translators, therefore, have not only rendered מִלְכָּם erroneously as Μολόχ, but have arbitrarily twisted the other words of the Hebrew text. For the Hebrew reading מִלְכָּם is proved to be the original one, not only by the *τοῦ βασιλείας ὑμῶν* of Symm. and Theod., but also by the *Μαλχόμ* of Aquila

and the מלכֹם of the Peshito; and all the other ancient translators enter a protest against the displacing of the other words. The name *Ραιφάν* (*Ρηφαν*), or *Ρεμφάν* (Acts vii. 43), however, owes its origin simply to the false reading of the unpointed כִּיפ as רִיפ, inasmuch as in the old Hebrew writing not only is כ similar to ר, but י is also similar to פ; and in 2 Sam. xxii. 12, where הַשָּׁרֵת־מִיָּם is rendered σκοτός (i.e. הַשָּׁרֵת) *ὕδατον*, we have an example of the interchange of כ and ר. There was no god *Rephan* or *Rempha*; for the name never occurs apart from the LXX. The statement made in the Arabico-Coptic list of planets, edited by Ath. Kircher, that *Suhhel* (the Arabic name of Saturn) is the same as *Ρηφάν*, and the remark found in a Coptic ms. on the Acts of the Apostles, "*Rephan*

worship of the sun, was widely spread in Egypt from the very earliest times. According to the more recent investigations into the mythology of the ancient Egyptians which have been made by Lepsius (*Transactions of the Academy of Science at Berlin*, 1851, p. 157 sqq.), "the worship of the sun was the oldest kernel and most general principle of the religious belief of Egypt;" and this "was regarded even down to the very latest times as the outward culminating point of the whole system of

*deus temporis*," prove nothing more than that Coptic Christians supposed the *Rephan* or *Remphan*, whose name occurred in their version of the Bible which was founded upon the LXX., to be the star Saturn as the god of time; but they by no means prove that the ancient Egyptians called Saturn *Rephan*, or were acquainted with any deity of that name, since the occurrence of the Greek names Ὑλια and Σελινη for sun and moon are a sufficient proof of the very recent origin of the list referred to. It is true that the Peshito has also rendered כִּיָּן by כְּוֹן (כִּיָּן), by which the Syrians understood Saturn, as we may see from a passage of Ephraem Syrus, quoted by Gesenius in his *Comm. on Isaiah* (ii. p. 344), where this father, in his *Sermones adv. hæres.* s. 8, when ridiculing the star-worshippers, refers to the *Kevan*, who devoured his own children. But no further evidence can be adduced in support of the correctness of this explanation of כִּיָּן. The corresponding use of the Arabic *Kaivan* for Saturn, to which appeal has also been made, does not occur in any of the earlier Arabic writings, but has simply passed into the Arabic from the Persian; so that the name and its interpretation originated with the Syrian church, passing thence to the Persians, and eventually reaching the Arabs through them. Consequently the interpretation of *Kevan* by Saturn has no higher worth than that of an exegetical conjecture, which is not elevated into a truth by the fact that כִּיָּן is mentioned in the *Cod. Nazar.* i. p. 54, ed. Norb., in connection with Nebo, Bel, and Nerig (= Nergal). With the exception of these passages, and the gloss of a recent Arabian grammarian cited by Bochart, viz. "Keivan signifies Suhhel," not a single historical trace can be found of *Kevan* having been an ancient oriental name of Saturn; so that the latest supporter of this hypothesis, namely Movers (*Phönizier*, i. p. 290), has endeavoured to prop up the arguments already mentioned in his own peculiar and uncritical manner, by recalling the Phœnician and Babylonian names, *San-Choniâth*, *Kyn-el-Adan*, and others. Not even the Græco-Syrian fathers make any reference to this interpretation. Theodoret cannot say anything more about Μολόχ καὶ Περφάν, than that they were εἰδώλων ὀνόματα; and Theod. Mops. has this observation on Περφάν: φασὶ δὲ τὸν ἐσφύρον οὕτω κατὰ τὴν Ἑβραίων γλῶτταν. It is still very doubtful, therefore, whether the Alexandrian and Syrian translators of Amos really supposed Περφάν and כִּיָּן to signify Saturn; and this interpretation, whether it originated with the translators named, or was first started by

religion" (Lepsius, p. 193). The first group of deities of Upper and Lower Egypt consists of none but sun-gods (p. 188).<sup>1</sup> *Ra*, i.e. Helios, is the prototype of the kings, the highest potency and prototype of nearly all the gods, the king of the gods, and he is identified with Osiris (p. 194). But from the time of Menes, Osiris has been worshipped in This and Abydos; whilst in Memphis the bull Apis was regarded as the living copy of Osiris (p. 191). According to Herodotus (ii. 42), Osiris and Isis were the only gods worshipped by the ancient Egyptians; and, according to Diodorus Sic. (i. 11), the Egyptians were said to have had originally only two gods, Helios and Selene, and to have worshipped the former in Osiris, the latter in Isis. The *Pan* of *Mendes* appears to have also been a peculiar form of Osiris (cf. Diod. Sic. i. 25, and Lepsius, p. 175). Herodotus (ii. 145) speaks of this as of primeval antiquity, and reckons it

later commentators upon these versions, arose in all probability simply from a combination of the Greek legend concerning Saturn, who swallowed his own children, and the Moloch who was worshipped with the sacrifice of children, and therefore might also be said to devour children; that is to say, it was merely an inference drawn from the rendering of מלככם as Μολέχ. But we are precluded from thinking of Moloch-worship, or regarding מלככם, "your king," as referring to Moloch, by the simple circumstance that אלהיכם unquestionably points to the Sabæan (sidereal) character of the worship condemned by Amos, whereas nothing is known of the sidereal nature of Moloch; and even if the sun is to be regarded as the physical basis of this deity, as Münter, Creuzer, and others conjecture, it is impossible to discover the slightest trace in the Old Testament of any such basis as this.

The Alexandrian translation of this passage, which we have thus shown to rest upon a misinterpretation of the Hebrew text, has acquired a greater importance than it would otherwise possess, from the fact that the proto-martyr Stephen, in his address (Acts vii. 42, 43), has quoted the words of the prophet according to that version, simply because the departure of the Greek translation from the original text was of no consequence, so far as his object was concerned, viz. to prove to the Jews that they had always resisted the Holy Ghost, inasmuch as the Alex. rendering also contains the thought, that their fathers worshipped the σπαρτιά τοῦ οὐρανοῦ.

<sup>1</sup> It is true, that in the first divine sphere *Ra* occupies the second place according to the Memphitic doctrine, namely, after *Phtha* (*Hephæstos*), and according to the Theban doctrine, *Amen* ("Αμην). *Mentu* and *Atmu* stand at the head (Lepsius, p. 186); but the two deities, *Mentu*, i.e. the rising sun, and *Atmu*, i.e. the setting sun, are simply a splitting up of *Ra*; and both *Hephæstos* and *Amon* (*Amon-Ra*) were placed at the head of the gods at a later period (Lepsius, pp. 187, 189).

among the eight so-called first gods; and Diodorus Sic. (i. 18) describes it as *διαφερόντως ὑπὸ τῶν Αἰγυπτίων τιμώμενον*. It was no doubt to these Egyptian sun-gods that the star-god which the Israelites carried about with them in the wilderness belonged. This is all that can at present be determined concerning it. There is not sufficient evidence to support Hengstenberg's opinion, that the Egyptian Pan as the sun-god was the king worshipped by them. It is also impossible to establish the identity of the king mentioned by Amos with the *שֶׁרִיף* in Lev. xvii. 7, since these *שֶׁרִיף*, even if they are connected with the goat-worship of Mendes, are not exhausted by this goat-deity.

The prophet therefore affirms that, during the forty years' journey through the wilderness, Israel did not offer sacrifices to its true King Jehovah, but carried about with it a star made into a god as the king of heaven. If, then, as has already been observed, we understand this assertion as referring to the great mass of the people, like the similar passage in Isa. xliii. 23, it agrees with the intimations in the Pentateuch as to the attitude of Israel. For, beside the several grosser outbreaks of rebellion against the Lord, which are the only ones recorded at all circumstantially there, and which show clearly enough that it was not devoted to its God with all its heart, we also find traces of open idolatry. Among these are the command in Lev. xvii., that every one who slaughtered a sacrificial animal was to bring it to the tabernacle, when taken in connection with the reason assigned, namely, that they were not to offer their sacrifices any more to the *S'irim*, after which they went a whoring (ver. 7), and the warning in Deut. iv. 19, against worshipping the sun, moon, and stars, even all the host of heaven, from which we may infer that Moses had a reason for this, founded upon existing circumstances. After this further proof of the apostasy of Israel from its God, the judgment already indicated in ver. 24 is still further defined in ver. 27 as the banishment of the people far beyond the borders of the land given to it by the Lord, where *higlâh* evidently points back to *yiggal* in ver. 24. *מִהֶלֶאָה לְ*, lit. "from afar with regard to," i.e. so that when looked at from Damascus, the place showed itself afar off, i.e. according to one mode of viewing it, "far beyond Damascus."

Ch. vi. The prophet utters the second woe over the careless heads of the nation, who were content with the existing state of things, who believed in no divine judgment, and who revelled in their riches (vers. 1-6). To these he announces destruction and the general overthrow of the kingdom (vers. 7-11), because they act perversely, and trust in their own power (vers. 12-14). Ver. 1. *"Woe to the secure upon Zion, and to the careless upon the mountain of Samaria, to the chief men of the first of the nations, to whom the house of Israel comes !"* Ver. 2. *"Go over to Calneh, and see ; and proceed thence to Hamath, the great one : and go down to Gath of the Philistines : are they indeed better than these kingdoms ? or is their territory greater than your territory ?"* Ver. 3. *"Ye who keep the day of calamity far off, and bring the seat of violence near."* This woe applies to the great men in Zion and Samaria, that is to say, to the chiefs of the whole of the covenant nation, because they were all sunk in the same godless security ; though special allusion is made to the corrupt leaders of the kingdom of the ten tribes, whose debauchery is still further depicted in what follows. These great men are designated in the words נְקִבֵי רֹאשֵׁי הַגּוֹיִם, as the heads of the chosen people, who are known by name. As רֹאשֵׁי הַגּוֹיִם is taken from Num. xxiv. 20, so נְקִבֵי is taken from Num. i. 17, where the heads of the tribes who were chosen as princes of the congregation to preside over the numbering of the people are described as men אֲשֶׁר נִקְבְּנוּ בְּשֵׁמוֹת, who were defined with names, i.e. distinguished by names, that is to say, well-known men ; and it is used here in the same sense. Observe, however, with reference to רֹאשֵׁי הַגּוֹיִם, that in Num. xxiv. 20 we have not הַגּוֹיִם, but simply רֹאשֵׁי גוֹיִם. Amalek is so called there, as being the first heathen nation which rose up in hostility to Israel. On the other hand, רִ' הַגּוֹיִם is the firstling of the nations, i.e. the first or most exalted of all nations. Israel is so called, because Jehovah had chosen it out of all the nations of the earth to be the people of His possession (Ex. xix. 5 ; cf. 2 Sam. vii. 23). In order to define with still greater precision the position of these princes in the congregation, Amos adds, "to whom the house of Israel cometh," namely, to have its affairs regulated by them as its rulers. These epithets were intended to remind the princes of the people of both kingdoms, "that they were the descendants of those tribe-



princes who had once been honoured to conduct the affairs of the chosen family, along with Moses and Aaron, and whose light shone forth from that better age as brilliant examples of what a truly theocratical character was" (Hengstenberg, *Dissertations*, i. p. 148). To give still greater prominence to the exalted calling of these princes, Amos shows in ver. 2 that Israel can justly be called the firstling of the nations, since it is not inferior either in prosperity or greatness to any of the powerful and prosperous heathen states. Amos names three great and flourishing capitals, because he is speaking to the great men of the capitals of the two kingdoms of Israel, and the condition of the whole kingdom is reflected in the circumstances of the capital. *Calneh* (= *Calno*, Isa. x. 9) is the later *Ctesiphon* in the land of Shinar, or Babylonia, situated upon the Tigris opposite to Seleucia (see at Gen. x. 10); hence the expression עֲבָרֵי, because men were obliged to cross over the river (Euphrates) in order to get there. *Hamath*: the capital of the Syrian kingdom of that name, situated upon the Orontes (see at Gen. x. 18 and Num. xxxiv. 8.) There was not another Hamath, as Hitzig supposes. The circumstance that Amos mentions Calneh first, whereas it was much farther to the east, so that Hamath was nearer to Palestine than Calneh was, may be explained very simply, from the fact that the enumeration commences with the most distant place and passes from the north-east to the south-west, which was in the immediate neighbourhood of Israel. *Gath*: one of the five capitals of Philistia, and in David's time the capital of all Philistia (see at Josh. xiii. 3, 2 Sam. viii. 1). The view still defended by Baur—namely, that Amos mentions here three cities that had either lost their former grandeur, or had fallen altogether, for the purpose of showing the self-secure princes of Israel that the same fate awaited Zion and Samaria—is groundless and erroneous; for although *Calneh* is spoken of in Isa. x. 9 as a city that had been conquered by the Assyrians, it cannot be proved that this was the case as early as the time of Amos, but is a simple inference drawn from a false interpretation of the verse before us. Nor did Jeroboam II. conquer the city of Hamath on the Orontes, and incorporate its territory with his own kingdom (see at 2 Kings xiv. 25). And although the Philistian city *Gath* was conquered by Uzziah (2 Chron. xxvi. 6), we cannot

infer from 2 Chron. xxvi. 6, or from the fact of Gath not being mentioned in Amos i. 6-8, that this occurred before the time of Amos (see at ch. i. 8). On the other hand, the fact that it is placed by the side of Hamath in the passage before us, is rather a proof that the conquest did not take place till afterwards. Ver. 2b states what the princes of Israel are to see in the cities mentioned,—namely, that they are not better off (טוֹבִים denoting outward success or earthly prosperity) than these two kingdoms, *i.e.* the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, and that their territories are not larger than theirs. It is very evident that this does not apply to cities that have been destroyed. The double question הֲ... אֵם requires a negative answer. Ver. 3 assigns the reason for the woe pronounced upon the sinful security of the princes of Israel, by depicting the godless conduct of these princes; and this is appended in the manner peculiar to Amos, *viz.* in participles. These princes fancy that the evil day, *i.e.* the day of misfortune or of judgment and punishment, is far away (מִנֵּיהֶם, *piel* of נָרָה = נָרַד, to be far off, signifies in this instance not to put far away, but to regard as far off); and they go so far as to prepare a seat or throne close by for wickedness and violence, which must be followed by judgment. הִנֵּישׁ שֶׁבֶת, to move the sitting (*shebheeth* from *yāshabh*) of violence near, or better still, taking *shebheeth* in the sense of enthroning, as Ewald does, to move the throne of violence nearer, *i.e.* to cause violence to erect its throne nearer and nearer among them.

This forgetfulness of God shows itself more especially in the reckless licentiousness and debauchery of these men. Ver. 4. "*They who lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat lambs from the flock, and calves out of the fattening stall.*" Ver. 5. "*Who prattle to the tune of the harp; like David, they invent string instruments.*" Ver. 6. "*Who drink wine out of sacrificial bowls, and anoint themselves with the best oils, and do not afflict themselves for the hurt of Joseph.*" They lie stretched, as it were poured out (סָרָחִים), upon beds inlaid with ivory, to feast and fill their belly with the flesh of the best lambs and fattened calves, to the playing of harps and singing, in which they take such pleasure, that they invent new kinds of playing and singing. The ἀπ. λεγ. *pārat*, to strew around (cf. *peret* in Lev. xix. 10), in Arabic to throw many

useless words about, to gossip, describes the singing at the banquets as frivolous nonsense. כְּלֵי שִׁיר, articles or instruments of singing, are not musical instruments generally, but, as we may see from 2 Chron. xxxiv. 12, compared with 2 Chron. xxix. 26, 27, and 1 Chron. xxiii. 5, the stringed instruments that were either invented by David (e.g. the *nebel*), or arranged by him for the sacred song of the temple, together with the peculiar mode of playing them; in other words, "the playing upon stringed instruments introduced by David." Consequently the meaning of ver. 5 is the following: As David invented stringed instruments in honour of his God in heaven, so do these princes invent playing and singing for their god, the belly. The meaning to invent or devise, which Baur will not allow to נָשַׁב, is established beyond all doubt by Ex. xxxi. 4. They drink thereby out of sacrificial bowls of wine, i.e. drink wine out of sacrificial bowls. שָׁתָה with כֵּי, as in Gen. xlv. 5. *Mizráq*, in the plural *mizráqim* and *mizráqôth*, from *zâraq*, to sprinkle, was the name given both to the vessels used for the sprinkling of the blood, and also to the bowls made use of for pouring the libation of wine upon the table of shew-bread (2 Chron. iv. 8). This word is applied by Amos to the bowls out of which the gluttons drank their wine; with special reference to the offering of silver sacrificial bowls made by the tribe-princes at the consecration of the altar (Num. vii.), to show that whereas the tribe-princes of Israel in the time of Moses manifested their zeal for the service of Jehovah by presenting sacrificial bowls of silver, the princes of his own time showed just as much zeal in their care for their god, the belly. *Mizráqim* does not mean "rummers, or pitchers used for mixing wine." Lastly, Amos refers to their anointing themselves with the firstling of the oils, i.e. the best oils, as a sign of unbridled rejoicing, inasmuch as the custom of anointing was suspended in time of mourning (2 Sam. xiv. 2), for the purpose of appending the antithesis נָחֳלִי נָחֳלִי, they do not afflict or grieve themselves for the ruin of Israel. *Shēbher*, breach, injury, destruction. *Joseph* signifies the people and kingdom of the ten tribes.

Vers. 7-11. Announcement of Punishment. — Ver. 7. "Therefore will they now go into captivity at the head of the captives, and the shouting of the revellers will depart." Because these revellers do not trouble themselves about the ruin of

Israel, they will now be obliged to wander into captivity at the head of the people (cf. 1 Kings xxi. 9), when the approaching *shebher* occurs. בְּרֹאשׁ וְלִים is chosen with direct reference to רִאשִׁית שְׂמָנִים, as Jerome has observed: "Ye who are *first* in riches will be the *first* to bear the yoke of captivity." *S'rúchim* also points back to ver. 4, "those who are stretched upon their couches"—that is, the revellers; and it forms a play upon words with *mirzach*. מִרְחָה signifies a loud cry, here a joyous cry, in Jer. xvi. 5 a cry of lamentation.

This threat is carried out still further in vers. 8-11. Ver. 8. "The Lord Jehovah hath sworn by Himself, is the saying of Jehovah, the God of hosts: I abhor the pride of Jacob, and his palaces I hate; and give up the city, and the fulness thereof. Ver. 9. And it will come to pass, if ten men are left in a house, they shall die. Ver. 10. And when his cousin lifts him up, and he that burieth him, to carry out the bones out of the house, and saith to the one in the hindermost corner of the house, Is there still any one with thee? and he says, Not one; then will he say, Hush; for the name of Jehovah is not to be invoked. Ver. 11. For, behold, Jehovah commandeth, and men smite the great house to ruins, and the small house into shivers." In order to show the secure debauchees the terrible severity of the judgments of God, the Lord announces to His people with a solemn oath the rejection of the nation which is so confident in its own power (cf. ver. 13). The oath runs here as in ch. iv. 2, with this exception, that instead of בְּקִרְשׁוֹ we have בְּנַפְשׁוֹ in the same sense; for the *nephesh* of Jehovah, His inmost being or self, is His holiness. מִתְחַבֵּב, with the guttural softened, for מִתְחַבֵּב. The participle describes the abhorrence as a continued lasting feeling, and not a merely passing emotion. גִּאון יַעֲקֹב, the loftiness or pride of Jacob, i.e. everything of which Jacob is proud, the true and imaginary greatness and pride of Israel, which included the palaces of the voluptuous great men, for which reason they are placed in parallelism with גִּאון יִשְׂרָאֵל. This glory of Israel Jehovah abhors, and He will destroy it by giving up the city (Samaria), and all that fills it (houses and men), to the enemies to be destroyed. הִסְפִּיר, to give up to the enemy, as in Deut. xxxii. 30 and Ob. 14; not to surround, to which מִלְחָמָה is unsuitable. The words not only threaten surrounding, or siege, but also conquest, and (ver. 11) the destruction of the

city. And then, even if there are ten in one house, they will all perish. **אַנְשֵׁים**: people, men. Ten in one house is a large number, which the prophet assumes as the number, to give the stronger emphasis to the thought that not one will escape from death. This thought is still further explained in ver. 10. A relative comes into the house to bury his deceased blood-relation. The suffix to **נִשְׂאוֹ** refers to the idea involved in **מָתוּ**, a dead man. *Dōd*, literally the father's brother, here any near relation whose duty it was to see to the burial of the dead. **מִסְכָּרָה** for **מִשְׁכָּרָה**, the burner, *i.e.* the burier of the dead. The Israelites were indeed accustomed to *bury* their dead, and not to *burn* the corpses. The description of the burier as *m'sârêph* (a burner) therefore supposes the occurrence of such a multitude of deaths that it is impossible to bury the dead, whose corpses are obliged to be burned, for the purpose of preventing the air from being polluted by the decomposition of the corpses. Of course the burning did not take place at the house, as Hitzig erroneously infers from **לְהוֹצִיאַ עֲצָמִים**; for **עֲצָמִים** denotes the corpse here, as in Ex. xiii. 19, Josh. xxiv. 32, and 2 Kings xiii. 21, and not the different bones of the dead which remained without decomposition or burning. The burier now asks the last living person in the house, who has gone to the very back of the house in order to save his life, whether there is any one still with him, any one still living in the house beside himself, and receives the answer, **עֵדֶם** (adv.), "Nothing more;" whereupon he says to him, *has*, "Be still," answering to our Hush! because he is afraid that, if he goes on speaking, he may invoke the name of God, or pray for the mercy of God; and he explains his words by adding, "The name of Jehovah must not be mentioned." It is not Amos who adds this explanation, but the relation. Nor does it contain "the words of one who despairs of any better future, and whose mind is oppressed by the weight of the existing evils, as if he said, Prayers would be of no use, for we too must die" (Livel., Ros.). **לֹא לְהוֹצִיר**, "it is not to (may not) be mentioned," would be unsuitable as an utterance of despair. It rather indicates the fear lest, by the invocation of the name of God, the eye of God should be drawn towards this last remaining one, and he also should fall a victim to the judgment of death. This judgment the Lord accomplishes not merely by a pestilence which breaks out during the siege, and

rages all around (there is no ground for any such limitation of the words), but also by sword and plague during the siege and conquest of the town. For the reason assigned for the threat in ver. 11 points to the latter. 'פ links the words to the main thought in ver. 11, or even ver. 10b: "When the Lord delivers up the city and all that fills it, they will all perish; for, behold, He commands, orders the enemy (the nation in ver. 14), and it will smite in pieces the houses, great and small." The singular הַבַּיִת is used with indefinite generality: every house, great and small (cf. ch. iii. 15).

Vers. 12-14. This judgment also, they, with their perversion of all right, will be unable to avert by their foolish trust in their own power. Ver. 12. "*Do horses indeed run upon the rock, or do men plough (there) with oxen, that ye turn justice into poison, and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood?*" Ver. 13. *They who rejoice over what is worthless, who say: with our strength we make ourselves horns!* Ver. 14. *For, behold, I raise over you, O house of Israel, is the saying of Jehovah, the God of hosts, a nation; and they will oppress you from the territory of Hamath to the brook of the desert.*" To explain the threat in ver. 11, Amos now calls attention in ver. 12, under two different similes, to the perversity with which the haughty magnates of Israel, who turn right into bitter wrong, imagine that they can offer a successful resistance, or bid defiance with their own strength to the enemy, whom the Lord will raise up as the executor of His judgment. The perversion of right into its opposite can no more bring salvation than horses can run upon rocks, or any one plough upon such a soil with oxen. In the second question בְּפֶלֶעַ (on the rock) is to be repeated from the first, as the majority of commentators suppose. But the two questions are not to be taken in connection with the previous verse in the sense of "Ye will no more be able to avert this destruction than horses can run upon rocks," etc. (Chr. B. Mich.) They belong to what follows, and are meant to expose the moral perversity of the unrighteous conduct of the wicked. For 'פְּכֶתֶם וּ', see ch. v. 7; and for רָאשׁ, Hos. x. 4. The impartial administration of justice is called the "fruit of righteousness," on account of the figurative use of the terms darnel and wormwood. These great men, however, rejoice thereby in לֹא דָבָר, "a nothing," or a thing which has no existence. What

the prophet refers to may be seen from the parallel clause, viz. their imaginary strength (*chōzeq*). They rested this hope upon the might with which Jeroboam had smitten the Syrians, and restored the ancient boundaries of the kingdom. From this might they would take to themselves (*lāqach*, to take, not now for the first time to create, or ask of God) the horns, to thrust down all their foes. *Horns* are signs and symbols of power (cf. Deut. xxxiii. 17; 1 Kings xxii. 11); here they stand for the military resources, with which they fancied that they could conquer every foe. These delusions of God-forgetting pride the prophet casts down, by saying that Jehovah the God of hosts will raise up a nation against them, which will crush them down in the whole length and breadth of the kingdom. This nation was Assyria. *Kî hinnēh* (for behold) is repeated from ver. 11; and the threat in ver. 14 is thereby described as the resumption and confirmation of the threat expressed in ver. 11, although the *kî* is connected with the perversity condemned in vers. 12, 13, of trusting in their own power. *Lāchats*, to oppress, to crush down. On the expression לְבֹאֵי הַמָּת, as a standing epithet for the northern boundary of the kingdom of Israel, see Num. xxxiv. 8. As the southern boundary we have נַחַל הָעֲרֵבָה instead of יַם הָעֲרֵבָה (2 Kings xiv. 25). This is not the willow-brook mentioned in Isa. xv. 7, the present Wady *Sufsaf*, or northern arm of the Wady *el-Kerek* (see Delitzsch on Isaiah, *l.c.*), nor the *Rhinokorura*, the present *el-Arish*, which formed the southern boundary of Canaan, because this is constantly called "the brook of Egypt" (see at Num. xxxiv. 5, Josh. xv. 4), but the present *el-Ahsy* (*Ahsa*), the southern border river which separated Moab from Edom (see at 2 Kings xiv. 25).

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### III. SIGHTS OR VISIONS.

The last part of the writings of Amos contains five visions, which confirm the contents of the prophetic addresses in the preceding part. The first four visions, however (ch. vii. and viii.), are distinguished from the fifth and last (ch. ix.) by the fact, that whereas the former all commence with the same

formula, "Thus hath the Lord showed me," the latter commences with the words, "I saw the Lord," etc. They also differ in their contents, inasmuch as the former symbolize the judgments which have already fallen in part upon Israel, and in part have still to fall; whilst the latter, on the contrary, proclaims the overthrow of the old theocracy, and after this the restoration of the fallen kingdom of God, and its ultimate glory. And again, of these four, the first and second (ch. vii. 1-6) are distinguished from the third and fourth (ch. vii. 7-9, and viii. 1-3) by the fact, that whereas the former contain a promise in reply to the prophet's intercession, that Jacob shall be spared, in the latter any further sparing is expressly refused; so that they are thus formed into two pairs, which differ from one another both in their contents and purpose. This difference is of importance, in relation both to the meaning and also to the historical bearing of the visions. It points to the conclusion, that the first two visions indicate universal judgments, whilst the third and fourth simply threaten the overthrow of the kingdom of Israel in the immediate future, the commencement of which is represented in the fifth and last vision, and which is then still further depicted in its results in connection with the realization of the divine plan of salvation.

VISIONS OF THE LOCUSTS, THE FIRE, AND THE PLUMB-LINE.  
THE PROPHET'S EXPERIENCE AT BETHEL.—CHAP. VII.

Vers. 1-6. The first two visions.—Vers. 1-3. THE LOCUSTS.—Ver. 1. "*Thus the Lord Jehovah showed me; and, behold, He formed locusts in the beginning of the springing up of the second crop; and, behold, it was a second crop after the king's mowing.*" Ver. 2. "*And it came to pass, when they had finished eating the vegetable of the land, I said, Lord Jehovah, forgive, I pray: how can Jacob stand? for he is small.*" Ver. 3. "*Jehovah repented of this: It shall not take place, saith Jehovah.*" The formula, "Thus the Lord Jehovah showed me," is common to this and the three following visions (vers. 4, 7, and ch. viii. 1), with this trifling difference, that in the third (ver. 7) the subject (the Lord Jehovah) is omitted, and 'Adōnāi (the Lord) is inserted instead, after *v'hinnēh* (and behold). הִנֵּנִי denotes seeing with the eyes of the mind—a visionary seeing.



These visions are not merely pictures of a judgment which was ever threatening, and drawing nearer and nearer (Baur); still less are they merely poetical fictions, or forms of drapery selected arbitrarily, for the purpose of clothing the prophet's thoughts; but they are inward intuitions, produced by the Spirit of God, which set forth the punitive judgments of God. *Kōh* (*ita*, thus) points to what follows, and *v'hinnēh* (and behold) introduces the thing seen. Amos sees the Lord form locusts. Baur proposes to alter יֹצֵר (forming) into יָצַר (forms), but without any reason, and without observing that in all three visions of this chapter *hinnēh* is followed by a participle (לֹמֵד in ver. 4, and נָצַב in ver. 7), and that the 'Adōnāi which stands before נָצַב in ver. 7 shows very clearly that this noun is simply omitted in ver. 1, because 'Adōnāi *Y'hōvāh* has immediately preceded it. נָבִי (a poetical form for נֹבֵחַ, analogous to שָׁרִי for שָׁרֵה, and contracted into נֹב in Nah. iii. 17) signifies locusts, the only question being, whether this meaning is derived from נָבַח = جَاب, to cut, or from נָבַח = جَبَّ, to creep forth (out of the earth). The fixing of the time has an important bearing upon the meaning of the vision: viz. "at the beginning of the springing up of the second crop (of grass);" especially when taken in connection with the explanation, "after the mowings of the king." These definitions cannot be merely intended as outward chronological data. For, in the first place, nothing is known of the existence of any right or prerogative on the part of the kings of Israel, to have the early crop in the meadow land throughout the country mown for the support of their horses and mules (1 Kings xviii. 5), so that their subjects could only get the second crop for their own cattle. Moreover, if the second crop, "after the king's mowings," were to be interpreted literally in this manner, it would decidedly weaken the significance of the vision. For if the locusts did not appear till after the king had got in the hay for the supply of his own mews, and so only devoured the second crop of grass as it grew, this plague would fall upon the people alone, and not at all upon the king. But such an exemption of the king from the judgment is evidently at variance with the meaning of this and the following visions. Consequently the definition of the time must be interpreted spiritually, in accord-

ance with the idea of the vision. The king, who has had the early grass mown, is Jehovah; and the mowing of the grass denotes the judgments which Jehovah has already executed upon Israel. The growing of the second crop is a figurative representation of the prosperity which flourished again after those judgments; in actual fact, therefore, it denotes the time when the dawn had risen again for Israel (ch. iv. 13). Then the locusts came and devoured all the vegetables of the earth. עֵשֶׂב הָאָרֶץ is not the second crop; for עֵשֶׂב does not mean grass, but vegetables, the plants of the field (see at Gen. i. 11). Vers. 2 and 3 require that this meaning should be retained. When the locusts had already eaten the vegetables of the earth, the prophet interceded, and the Lord interposed with deliverance. This intercession would have been too late after the consumption of the second crop. On the other hand, when the vegetables had been consumed, there was still reason to fear that the consumption of the second crop of grass would follow; and this is averted at the prophet's intercession. וַיְהִי וַיְהִי for וַיְהִי, as in 1 Sam. xvii. 48, Jer. xxxvii. 11, etc. סָלַח־נָא, pray forgive, *sc.* the guilt of the people (cf. Num. xiv. 19). מִי יָקוּם, how (*qualis*) can Jacob (the nation of Israel) stand (not arise), since it is small? קָטָן, small, *i.e.* so poor in sources and means of help, that it cannot endure this stroke; not "so crushed already, that a very light calamity would destroy it" (Rosenmüller). For נָחַם עַל, see Ex. xxxii. 14. זָאת (this) refers to the destruction of the people indicated in מִי יָקוּם; and זָאת is also to be supplied as the subject to לֹא תִהְיֶה.

Vers. 4-6. THE DEVOURING FIRE.—Ver. 4. "Thus the Lord Jehovah showed me: and, behold, the Lord Jehovah called to punish with fire; and it devoured the great flood, and devoured the portion. Ver. 5. And I said, Lord Jehovah, leave off, I pray: how can Jacob stand? for it is small. Ver. 6. Jehovah repented of this; this also shall not take place, said the Lord Jehovah." That the all-devouring fire represents a much severer judgment than that depicted under the figure of the locusts, is generally acknowledged, and needs no proof. But the more precise meaning of this judgment is open to dispute, and depends upon the explanation of the fourth verse. The object to קָרָא is לָרִיב בְּאֵשׁ, and לָרִיב is to be taken as an infinitive,

as in Isa. iii. 13 : He called to strive (*i.e.* to judge or punish) with fire. There is no necessity to supply *ministros suos* here. The expression is a concise one, for "He called to the fire to punish with fire" (for the expression and the fact, compare Isa. lxvi. 16). This fire devoured the great flood. *T'hōm rabbāh* is used in Gen. vii. 11 and Isa. li. 10, etc., to denote the unfathomable ocean ; and in Gen. i. 2 *t'hōm* is the term applied to the immense flood which surrounded and covered the globe at the beginning of the creation. <sup>וַתִּכְלֶה</sup>, as distinguished from <sup>וַתִּחַלֵּךְ</sup>, signifies an action in progress, or still incomplete (Hitzig). The meaning therefore is, "it also devoured (began to devour) 'eth-hachēleq ;" *i.e.* not the field, for a field does not form at all a fitting antithesis to the ocean ; and still less "the land," for *chēleq* never bears this meaning ; but the inheritance or portion, namely, that of Jehovah (Deut. xxxii. 9), *i.e.* Israel. Consequently *t'hōm rabbāh* cannot, of course, signify the ocean as such. For the idea of the fire falling upon the ocean, and consuming it, and then beginning to consume the land of Israel, by which the ocean was bounded (Hitzig), would be too monstrous ; nor is it justified by the simple remark, that "it was as if the last great conflagration (2 Pet. iii. 10) had begun" (Schmieder). As the fire is not earthly fire, but the fire of the wrath of God, and therefore a figurative representation of the judgment of destruction ; and as *hachēleq* (the portion) is not the land of Israel, but according to Deuteronomy (*l.c.*) Israel, or the people of Jehovah ; so *t'hōm rabbāh* is not the ocean, but the heathen world, the great sea of nations, in their rebellion against the kingdom of God. The world of nature in a state of agitation is a frequent symbol in the Scriptures for the agitated heathen world (*e.g.* Ps. xli. 3, xciii. 3, 4). On the latter passage, Delitzsch has the following apt remark : "The stormy sea is a figurative representation of the whole heathen world, in its estrangement from God, and enmity against Him, or the human race outside the true church of God ; and the rivers are figurative representations of the kingdoms of the world, *e.g.* the Nile of the Egyptian (Jer. xli. 7, 8), the Euphrates of the Assyrian (Isa. viii. 7, 8), or more precisely still, the arrow-swift Tigris of the Assyrian, and the winding Euphrates of the Babylonian (Isa. xxvii. 1)." This symbolism lies at the foundation of the vision seen by the prophet. The

world of nations, in its rebellion against Jehovah, the Lord and King of the world, appears as a great flood, like the chaos at the beginning of the creation, or the flood which poured out its waves upon the globe in the time of Noah. Upon this flood of nations does fire from the Lord fall down and consume them; and after consuming them, it begins to devour the inheritance of Jehovah, the nation of Israel also. The prophet then prays to the Lord to spare it, because Jacob would inevitably perish in this conflagration; and the Lord gives the promise that "this shall not take place," so that Israel is plucked like a firebrand out of the fire (ch. iv. 11).

If we inquire now into the historical bearing of these two visions, so much is *à priori* clear,—namely, that both of them not only indicate judgments already past, but also refer to the future, since no fire had hitherto burned upon the surface of the globe, which had consumed the world of nations and threatened to annihilate Israel. If therefore there is an element of truth in the explanation given by Grotius to the first vision, "After the fields had been shorn by Benhadad (2 Kings xiii. 3), and after the damage which was then sustained, the condition of Israel began to flourish once more during the reign of Jeroboam the son of Joash, as we see from 2 Kings xiv. 15," according to which the locusts would refer to the invasion on the part of the Assyrians in the time of Pul; this application is much too limited, neither exhausting the contents of the first vision, nor suiting in the smallest degree the figure of the fire. The "mowing of the king" (ver. 1) denotes rather all the judgments which the Lord had hitherto poured out upon Israel, embracing everything that the prophet mentions in ch. iv. 6-10. The locusts are a figurative representation of the judgments that still await the covenant nation, and will destroy it even to a small remnant, which will be saved through the prayers of the righteous. The vision of the fire has a similar scope, embracing all the past and all the future; but this also indicates the judgments that fall upon the heathen world, and will only receive its ultimate fulfilment in the destruction of everything that is ungodly upon the face of the earth, when the Lord comes in fire to strive with all flesh (Isa. lxvi. 15, 16), and to burn up the earth and all that is therein, on the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men (2 Pet. iii. 7, 10-13).

The removal of the two judgments, however, by Jehovah in consequence of the intercession of the prophet, shows that these judgments are not intended to effect the utter annihilation of the nation of God, but simply its refinement and the rooting out of the sinners from the midst of it, and that, in consequence of the sparing mercy of God, a holy remnant of the nation of God will be left. The next two visions refer simply to the judgment which awaits the kingdom of the ten tribes in the immediate future.

Vers. 7-9. THE THIRD VISION.—Ver. 7. “*Thus he showed me: and, behold, the Lord stood upon a wall made with a plumb-line, and a plumb-line in His hand.*” Ver. 8. “*And Jehovah said to me, What seest thou, Amos? And I said, A plumb-line. And the Lord said, Behold, I put a plumb-line in the midst of my people Israel: I shall pass by it no more.*” Ver. 9. “*And the sacrificial heights of Isaac are laid waste, and the holy things of Israel destroyed; and I rise up against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.*” The word אֲנָקָה, which only occurs here, denotes, according to the dialects and the Rabbins, tin or lead, here a plumb-line. *Chōmath ’ānākh* is a wall built with a plumb-line, *i.e.* a perpendicular wall, a wall built with mechanical correctness and solidity. Upon this wall Amos sees the Lord standing. The wall built with a plumb-line is a figurative representation of the kingdom of God in Israel, as a firm and well-constructed building. He holds in His hand a plumb-line. The question addressed to the prophet, “What does he see?” is asked for the simple purpose of following up his answer with an explanation of the symbol, as in Jer. i. 11, 13, since the plumb-line was used for different purposes,—namely, not only for building, but partly also for pulling buildings down (compare 2 Kings xxi. 13; Isa. xxxiv. 11). Jehovah will lay it *b’qerebh ’ammā*, to the midst of His people, and not merely to an outward portion of it, in order to destroy this building. He will no longer spare as He has done hitherto. עָבַר לִּי, to pass by any one without taking any notice of him, without looking upon his guilt or punishing him; hence, to spare,—the opposite of עָבַר בְּקֶרֶב in ch. v. 17. The destruction will fall upon the idolatrous sanctuaries of the land, the *bāmōth* (see at 1 Kings iii. 2), *i.e.* the altars of the high places, and the temples at

Bethel, at Dan (see at 1 Kings xii. 29), and at Gilgal (see ch. iv. 4). Isaac (יִצְחָק, a softened form for יִצְחָק, used here and at ver. 16, as in Jer. xxxiii. 26) is mentioned here instead of *Jacob*, and the name is used as a synonym for *Israel* of the ten tribes. Even the house of Jeroboam, the reigning royal family, is to perish with the sword (לַעֲדָתָם as in Isa. xxxi. 2). Jeroboam is mentioned as the existing representative of the monarchy, and the words are not to be restricted to the overthrow of his dynasty, but announce the destruction of the Israelitish monarchy, which actually was annihilated when this dynasty was overthrown (see p. 41). The destruction of the sacred places and the overthrow of the monarchy involve the dissolution of the kingdom. Thus does Amos himself interpret his own words in vers. 11 and 17.

#### Vers. 10-17. OPPOSITION TO THE PROPHET AT BETHEL.

—The daring announcement of the overthrow of the royal family excites the wrath of the high priest at Bethel, so that he relates the affair to the king, to induce him to proceed against the troublesome prophet (vers. 10 and 11), and then calls upon Amos himself to leave Bethel (vers. 12 and 13). That this attempt to drive Amos out of Bethel was occasioned by his prophecy in vers. 7-10, is evident from what Amaziah says to the king concerning the words of Amos. "*The priest of Bethel*" (*Kōhēn Bēth-ēl*) is the high priest at the sanctuary of the golden calf at Bethel. He accused the prophet to the king of having made a conspiracy (*qāshar*; cf. 1 Kings xv. 27, etc.) against the king, and that "in the midst of the house of Israel," *i.e.* in the centre of the kingdom of Israel—namely at Bethel, the religious centre of the kingdom—through all his sayings, which the land could not bear. To establish this charge, he states (in ver. 11) that Amos has foretold the death of Jeroboam by the sword, and the carrying away of the people out of the land. Amos had really said this. The fact that in ver. 9 Jeroboam is named, and not the house of Jeroboam, makes no difference; for the head of the house is naturally included in the house itself. And the carrying away of the people out of the land was not only implied in the announcement of the devastation of the sanctuaries of the kingdom (ver. 9), which presupposes the conquest of the land

by foes; but Amos had actually predicted it in so many words (ch. v. 27). And Amaziah naturally gave the substance of all the prophet's addresses, instead of simply confining himself to the last. There is no reason, therefore, to think of intentional slander.

Vers. 12, 13. The king appears to have commenced no proceedings against the prophet in consequence of this denunciation, probably because he did not regard the affair as one of so much danger. Amaziah therefore endeavours to persuade the prophet to leave the country. "*Seer, go, and flee into the land of Judah.*" בְּרַח־לֶךְ, *i.e.* withdraw thyself by flight from the punishment which threatens thee. "*There eat thy bread, and there mayst thou prophesy:*" *i.e.* in Judah thou mayst earn thy bread by prophesying without any interruption. It is evident from the answer given by Amos in ver. 14, that this is the meaning of the words: "*But in Bethel thou shalt no longer prophesy, for it is a king's sanctuary (i.e. a sanctuary founded by the king; 1 Kings xii. 28), and bēth mamlākhāh,*" house of the kingdom, *i.e.* a royal capital (cf. 1 Sam. xxvii. 5),—namely, as being the principal seat of the worship which the king has established for his kingdom. There no one could be allowed to prophesy against the king.

Vers. 14, 15. Amos first of all repudiates the insinuation that he practises prophesying as a calling or profession, by which he gets his living. "*I am no prophet,*" *sc.* by profession, "*and no prophet's son,*" *i.e.* not a pupil or member of the prophets' schools, one who has been trained to prophesy (on these schools, see the comm. on 1 Sam. xix. 24); *but* (according to my proper calling) a *bōqēr*, *lit.* a herdsman of oxen (from *bāqār*); then in a broader sense, a herdsman who tends the sheep (אֵץ), a shepherd; and a *bōlēš shiqmīm*, *i.e.* one who plucks sycamores or mulberry-figs, and lives upon them. The ἀπ. λεγ. *bōlēš* is a denom. from the Arabic name for the mulberry-fig, and signifies to gather mulberry-figs and live upon them; like συκάζειν and ἀποσυκάζειν, *i.e.* according to Hesych. τὰ σῦκα τρώγειν, to eat figs. The rendering of the LXX. κνίζων, Vulg. *vellicans*, points to the fact that it was a common custom to nip or scratch the mulberry-figs, in order to make them ripen (see Theophr. *Hist. plant.* iv. 2; Plin. *Hist. nat.* 13, 14; and Bochart, *Hieroz.* i. 384, or p. 406 ed. Ros.); but

this cannot be shown to be the true meaning of *boles*. And even if the idea of nipping were implied in the word *boles*, it would by no means follow that the possession of a mulberry plantation was what was intended, as many commentators have inferred; for "the words contain an allusion to the 'eating of bread' referred to in ver. 12, and the fruit is mentioned here as the ordinary food of the shepherds, who lived at the pasture grounds, and to whom bread may have been a rarity" (Hitzig). From this calling, which afforded him a livelihood, the Lord had called him away to prophesy to His people Israel; so that whoever forbade him to do so, set himself in opposition to the Lord God.

Vers. 16, 17. In return for this rebellion against Jehovah, Amos foretels to the priest the punishment which will fall upon him when the judgment shall come upon Israel, meeting his words, "*Thou sayst, Thou shalt not prophesy,*" with the keen retort, "*Thus saith Jehovah.*" דָּרַחַם, to drip, applied to prophesying here and at Mic. ii. 6, 11, and Ezek. xxi. 2, 7, is taken from Deut. xxxii. 2, "My teaching shall drip as the rain," etc. *Isaac* (*yischâq*) for Israel, as in ver. 9. The punishment is thus described in ver. 17: "Thy wife will be a harlot in the city," *i.e.* at the taking of the city she will become a harlot through violation. His children would also be slain by the foe, and his landed possession assigned to others, namely, to the fresh settlers in the land. He himself, viz. the priest, would die in an unclean land, that is to say, in the land of the Gentiles,—in other words, would be carried away captive, and that with the whole nation, the carrying away of which is repeated by Amos in the words which the priest had reported to the king (ver. 11), as a sign that what he has prophesied will assuredly stand.

#### THE RIPENESS OF ISRAEL FOR JUDGMENT.—CHAP. VIII.

Under the symbol of a basket filled with ripe fruit, the Lord shows the prophet that Israel is ripe for judgment (vers. 1-3); whereupon Amos, explaining the meaning of this vision, announces to the unrighteous magnates of the nation the changing of their joyful feasts into days of mourning, as the punishment from God for their unrighteousness (vers. 4-10), and sets before them a time when those who now



despise the word of God will sigh in vain in their extremity for a word of the Lord (vers. 11-14).

Vers. 1-3. Vision of a BASKET OF RIPE FRUIT.—Ver. 1. *“Thus did the Lord Jehovah show me: and behold a basket with ripe fruit. Ver. 2. And He said, What seest thou, Amos? And I said, A basket of ripe fruit. Then Jehovah said to me, The end is come to my people Israel; I will not pass by them any more. Ver. 3. And the songs of the palace will yell in that day, is the saying of the Lord Jehovah: corpses in multitude; in every place hath He cast them forth; Hush!”* כָּלֵב from כָּלַב, to lay hold of, to grasp, lit. a receiver, here a basket (of basket-work), in Jer. v. 27 a bird-cage. רֶמֶס: summer-fruit (see at 2 Sam. xvi. 1); in Isa. xvi. 9, xxviii. 4, the gathering of fruit, hence ripe fruit. The basket of ripe fruit (*gayits*) is thus explained by the Lord: the end (*qēts*) is come to my people (cf. Ezek vii. 6). Consequently the basket of ripe fruit is a figurative representation of the nation that is now ripe for judgment, although *qēts*, the end, does not denote its ripeness for judgment, but its destruction, and the word *qēts* is simply chosen to form a paronomasia with *gayits*. לֹא אִשְׂפִּיחַ וְנִי as in ch. vii. 8. All the joy shall be turned into mourning. The thought is not that the temple-singing to the praise of God (ch. v. 23) would be turned into yelling, but that the songs of joy (ch. vi. 5; 2 Sam. xix. 36) would be turned into yells, i.e. into sounds of lamentation (cf. ver. 10 and 1 Macc. ix. 41), namely, because of the multitude of the dead which lay upon the ground on every side. הִשְׁלַף is not impersonal, in the sense of “which men are no longer able to bury on account of their great number, and therefore cast away in quiet places on every side;” but Jehovah is to be regarded as the subject, viz. which God has laid prostrate, or cast to the ground on every side. For the adverbial use of סָף cannot be established. The word is an interjection here, as in ch. vi. 10; and the exclamation, Hush! is not a sign of gloomy despair, but an admonition to bow beneath the overwhelming severity of the judgment of God, as in Zeph. i. 7 (cf. Hab. ii. 20 and Zech. ii. 17).

Vers. 4-10. To this vision the prophet attaches the last admonition to the rich and powerful men of the nation, to observe the threatening of the Lord before it is too late, im-

pressing upon them the terrible severity of the judgment. Ver. 4. "*Hear this, ye that gape for the poor, and to destroy the meek of the earth,* Ver. 5. *Saying, When is the new moon over, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may open wheat, to make the ephah small, and the shekel great, and to falsify the scale of deceit?* Ver. 6. *To buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes, and the refuse of the corn will we sell.*" The persons addressed are the *הַשְׂמָתִים אֲבִיּוֹן*, i.e. not those who snort at the poor man, to frighten him away from any further pursuit of his rights (Baur), but, according to ch. ii. 6, 7, those who greedily pant for the poor man, who try to swallow him (Hitzig). This is affirmed in the second clause of the verse, in which *שָׁמָּה* is to be repeated in thought before *לְהַשְׁבִּית*: they gape to destroy the quiet in the land (*עֲנִי-אֶרֶץ* = *עָנִים* in ch. ii. 7), "namely by grasping all property for themselves, Job xxii. 8, Isa. v. 8" (Hitzig). Vers. 5 and 6 show how they expect to accomplish their purpose. Like covetous usurers, they cannot even wait for the end of the feast-days to pursue their trade still further. *Chōdesh*, the new moon, was a holiday on which all trade was suspended, just as it was on the Sabbath (see at Num. xxviii. 11 and 2 Kings iv. 23). *הַשְּׁבִיר שֶׁבֶר*, to sell corn, as in Gen. xli. 57. *פָּתַח בֶּרֶךְ*, to open up corn, i.e. to open the granaries (cf. Gen. xli. 56). In doing so, they wanted to cheat the poor by small measure (ephah), and by making the shekel great, i.e. by increasing the price, which was to be weighed out to them; also by false scales (*ivvēth*, to pervert, or falsify the scale of deceit, i.e. the scale used for cheating), and by bad corn (*mappal*, waste or refuse); that in this way they might make the poor man so poor, that he would either be obliged to sell himself to them from want and distress (Lev. xxv. 39), or be handed over to the creditor by the court of justice, because he was no longer able to pay for a pair of shoes, i.e. the very smallest debt (cf. ch. ii. 6).

Such wickedness as this would be severely punished by the Lord. Ver. 7. "*Jehovah hath sworn by the pride of Jacob, Verily I will not forget all their deeds for ever.* Ver. 8. *Shall the earth not tremble for this, and every inhabitant upon it mourn? and all of it rises like the Nile, and heaves and sinks like the Nile of Egypt.*" The pride of Jacob is Jehovah, as in Hos. v. 5 and vii. 10. Jehovah swears by the pride of Jacob, as He

does by His holiness in ch. iv. 2, or by His soul in ch. vi. 8, *i.e.* as He who is the pride and glory of Israel: *i.e.* as truly as He is so, will He and must He punish such acts as these. By overlooking such sins, or leaving them unpunished, He would deny His glory in Israel. שָׁכַח, to forget a sin, *i.e.* to leave it unpunished. In ver. 8 the negative question is an expression denoting strong assurance. "For this" is generally supposed to refer to the sins; but this is a mistake, as the previous verse alludes not to the sins themselves, but to the punishment of them; and the solemn oath of Jehovah does not contain so subordinate and casual a thought, that we can pass over ver. 7, and take עַל זֹאת as referring back to vers. 4-6. It rather refers to the substance of the oath, *i.e.* to the punishment of the sins which the Lord announces with a solemn oath. This will be so terrible that the earth will quake, and be resolved, as it were, into its primeval condition of chaos. רָגַז, to tremble, or, when applied to the earth, to quake, does not mean to shudder, or to be shocked, as Rosenmüller explains it after Jer. ii. 12. Still less can the idea of the earth rearing and rising up in a stormy manner to cast them off, which Hitzig supports, be proved to be a biblical idea from Isa. xxiv. 20. The thought is rather that, under the weight of the judgment, the earth will quake, and all its inhabitants will be thrown into mourning, as we may clearly see from the parallel passage in ch. ix. 5. In ver. 8b this figure is carried out still further, and the whole earth is represented as being turned into a sea, heaving and falling in a tempestuous manner, just as in the case of the flood. כָּל־הָאָרֶץ, the totality of the earth, the entire globe, will rise, and swell and fall like waters lashed into a storm. This rising and falling of the earth is compared to the rising and sinking of the Nile. According to the parallel passage in ch. ix. 5, בָּאֵר is a defective form for בְּיָאֵר, just as בָּל is for יָבֵל in Job xl. 20, and it is still further defined by the expression מְצַרִּים, which follows. All the ancient versions have taken it as יָאֵר, and many of the Hebrew codd. (in Kennicott and De Rossi) have this reading. נִגְרַשׁ, to be excited, a term applied to the stormy sea (Isa. lvii. 20). נִשְׁקָה is a softened form for נִשְׁקָעָה, as is shown by שִׁקָּעָה in ch. ix. 5.

Ver. 9. "And it will come to pass on that day, is the saying of the Lord Jehovah, I cause the sun to set at noon, and make it

*dark to the earth in clear day.* Ver. 10. *And turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation: and bring mourning clothes upon all loins, and baldness upon every head; and make it like mourning for an only one, and the end thereof like a bitter day.*" The effect of the divine judgment upon the Israelites is depicted here. Just as the wicked overturn the moral order of the universe, so will the Lord, with His judgment, break through the order of nature, cause the sun to go down at noon, and envelope the earth in darkness in clear day. The words of the ninth verse are not founded upon the idea of an eclipse of the sun, though Michaelis and Hitzig not only assume that they are, but actually attempt to determine the time of its occurrence. An eclipse of the sun is not the setting of the sun (בוא). But to any man the sun sets at noon, when he is suddenly snatched away by death, in the very midst of his life. And this also applies to a nation when it is suddenly destroyed in the midst of its earthly prosperity. But it has a still wider application. When the Lord shall come to judgment, at a time when the world, in its self-security, looketh not for Him (cf. Matt. xxiv. 37 sqq.), this earth's sun will set at noon, and the earth be covered with darkness in bright daylight. And every judgment that falls upon an ungodly people or kingdom, as the ages roll away, is a harbinger of the approach of the final judgment. Ver. 10. When the judgment shall burst upon Israel, then will all the joyous feasts give way to mourning and lamentation (compare ver. 3 and ch. v. 16; Hos. ii. 13). On the shaving of a bald place as a sign of mourning, see Isa. iii. 24. This mourning will be very deep, like the mourning for the death of an only son (cf. Jer. vi. 26 and Zech. xii. 10). The suffix in עֲשֵׂתֶיהָ (I make it) does not refer to אָבֶל (mourning), but to all that has been previously mentioned as done upon that day, to their weeping and lamenting (Hitzig). אֶחָדָהּ, the end thereof, namely, of this mourning and lamentation, will be a bitter day (י is *caph verit.*; see at Joel i. 15). This implies that the judgment will not be a passing one, but will continue.

Vers. 11-14. And at that time the light and comfort of the word of God will also fail them. Ver. 11. "*Behold, days come, is the saying of the Lord Jehovah, that I send a hungering into the land, not a hungering for bread nor a thirst for water, but to*

hear the words of Jehovah. Ver. 12. *And they will reel from sea to sea; and from the north, and even to the east, they sweep round to seek the word of Jehovah, and will not find it.*" The bitterness of the time of punishment is increased by the fact that the Lord will then withdraw His word from them, i.e. the light of His revelation. They who will not now hear His word, as proclaimed by the prophets, will then cherish the greatest longing for it. Such hunger and thirst will be awakened by the distress and affliction that will come upon them. The intensity of this desire is depicted in ver. 12. They reel (וַיִּשְׁכָּחוּ as in ch. iv. 8) from the sea to the sea; that is to say, not "from the Dead Sea in the east to the Mediterranean in the west," for Joel ii. 20 and Zech. xiv. 8 are not cases in point, as the two seas are defined there by distinct epithets; but as in Ps. lxxii. 8 and Zech. ix. 10, according to which the meaning is, from the sea to where the sea occurs again, at the other end of the world, "the sea being taken as the boundary of the earth" (Hupfeld). The other clause, "from the north even to the east," contains an abridged expression for "from north to south and from west to east," i.e. to every quarter of the globe.

Ver. 13. *In that day will the fair virgins and the young men faint for thirst.* Ver. 14. *They who swear by the guilt of Samaria, and say, By the life of thy God, O Dan! and by the life of the way to Beersheba; and will fall, and not rise again.*" Those who now stand in all the fullest and freshest vigour of life, will succumb to this hunger and thirst. The virgins and young men are individualized, as comprising that portion of the nation which possessed the vigorous fulness of youth. וְהָיָה, to be enveloped in night, to sink into a swoon, *hithp.* to hide one's self, to faint away. הַנְּשִׁבְעִים refers to the young men and virgins; and inasmuch as they represent the most vigorous portion of the nation, to the nation as a whole. If the strongest succumb to the thirst, how much more the weak! 'Ashmath Shōm'rōn, the guilt of Samaria, is the golden calf at Bethel, the principal idol of the kingdom of Israel, which is named after the capital Samaria (compare Deut. ix. 21, "the sin of Israel"), not the Asherah which was still standing in Samaria in the reign of Jehoahaz (2 Kings xiii. 6); for apart from the question whether it was there in the time of Jeroboam, this is at variance with the second clause, in which the manner of

their swearing is given,—namely, by the life of the god at Dan, that is to say, the golden calf that was there; so that the guilt of Samaria can only have been the golden calf at Bethel, the national sanctuary of the ten tribes (cf. ch. iv. 4, v. 5). The way to Beersheba is mentioned, instead of the worship, for the sake of which the pilgrimage to Beersheba was made. This worship, again, was not a purely heathen worship, but an idolatrous worship of Jehovah (see ch. v. 5). The fulfilment of these threats commenced with the destruction of the kingdom of Israel, and the carrying away of the ten tribes into exile in Assyria, and continues to this day in the case of that portion of the Israelitish nation which is still looking for the Messiah, the prophet promised by Moses, and looking in vain, because they will not hearken to the preaching of the gospel concerning the Messiah, who appeared as Jesus.

DESTRUCTION OF THE SINFUL KINGDOM, AND ESTABLISHMENT  
OF THE NEW KINGDOM OF GOD.—CHAP. IX.

The prophet sees the Lord standing by the altar, and giving command to overthrow the temple, that the whole nation may be buried beneath the ruins (ver. 1). Should any one escape, the Lord will pursue him everywhere, and overtake and destroy him (vers. 2–4); for He is the Almighty God, and the Judge of the world (vers. 5 and 6); and Israel has become like the heathen, so that it deserves no sparing. Nevertheless it shall not be utterly destroyed, but simply sifted, and the sinful mass be slain (vers. 7–10). Then will the fallen tabernacle of David be raised up again, and the kingdom of God be glorified by the reception of all nations (ver. 12), and richly blessed with the fulness of the gifts of divine grace (vers. 13, 14), and never destroyed again (ver. 15). As the chapter gives the final development of the judgment threatened in the preceding one, so is it also closely attached in form to ch. vii. and viii., commencing with a vision just as they do. But whilst the preceding visions simply indicate the judgment which is to fall upon the sinful nation, and are introduced with the words, “The Lord showed me” (ch. vii. 1, 4, 7, viii. 1), this closing vision shows the Lord engaged in the execution of the judgment, and commences accordingly with the words, “I saw the Lord standing,” etc.

Ver. 1. "*I saw the Lord standing by the altar; and He said, Smite the top, that the thresholds may tremble, and smash them upon the head of all of them; and I will slay their remnant with the sword: a fugitive of them shall not flee; and an escaped one of them shall not escape.*" The correct and full interpretation not only of this verse, but of the whole chapter, depends upon the answer to be given to the question, what altar we are to understand by *hammizbēāch*. Ewald, Hitzig, Hofmann, and Baur follow Cyril in thinking of the temple at Bethel, because, as Hitzig says, this vision attaches itself in an explanatory manner to the close of ch. viii. 14, and because, according to Hofmann, "if the word of the prophet in general was directed against the kingdom, the royal house and the sanctuary of the ten tribes, the article before *hammizbēāch* points to the altar of the sanctuary in the kingdom of Israel, to the altar at Bethel, against which he has already prophesied in a perfectly similar manner in ch. iii. 14." But there is no ground whatever for the assertion that our vision contains simply an explanation of ch. viii. 14. The connection with ch. viii. is altogether not so close, that the object of the prophecy in the one chapter must of necessity cover that of the other. And it is quite incorrect to say that the word of the prophet throughout is directed simply against the kingdom of the ten tribes, or that, although Amos does indeed reprove the sins of Judah as well as those of Israel, he proclaims destruction to the kingdom of Jeroboam alone. As early as ch. ii. 5 he announces desolation to Judah by fire, and the burning of the palaces of Jerusalem; and in ch. vi. 1, again, he gives utterance to a woe upon the self-secure in Zion, as well as upon the careless ones in Samaria. And lastly, it is evident from vers. 8-10 of the present chapter, that the sinful kingdom which is to be destroyed from the face of the earth is not merely the kingdom of the ten tribes, but the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, which are embraced in one. For although it is stated immediately afterwards that the Lord will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, but will shake the house of Israel among all nations, the house of Jacob cannot mean the kingdom of Judah, and the house of Israel the kingdom of the ten tribes, because such a contrast between Judah and Israel makes the thought too lame, and the antithesis between the destruction of the sinful kingdom and the utter destruction

of the nation is quite obliterated. Amos does not generally draw such a distinction between the house of Jacob and the house of Israel, as that the first represents Judah, and the second the ten tribes; but he uses the two epithets as synonymous, as we may see from a comparison of ch. vi. 8 with ch. vi. 14, where the rejection of the pride of Israel and the hating of its palaces (ver. 8) are practically interpreted by the raising up of a nation which oppresses the house of Israel in all its borders (ver. 14). And so also in the chapter before us, the "house of Israel" (ver. 9) is identical with "Israel" and the "children of Israel" (7), whom God brought up out of Egypt. But God brought up out of Egypt not the ten tribes, but the twelve. And consequently it is decidedly incorrect to restrict the contents of vers. 1-10 to the kingdom of the ten tribes. And if this be the case, we cannot possibly understand by *hammizbēāch* in ver. 1 the altar of Bethel, especially seeing that not only does Amos foretel the visitation or destruction of the altars of Bethel in ch. iii. 14, and therefore recognises not one altar only in Bethel, but a plurality of altars, but that he also speaks in ch. vii. 9 of the desolation of the high places and sanctuaries of Israel, and in ch. viii. 14 places the sanctuary at Dan on a par with that at Bethel; so that there was not any *one* altar in the kingdom of the ten tribes, which could be called *hammizbēāch*, the altar *par excellence*, inasmuch as it possessed from the very beginning two sanctuaries of equal dignity (viz. at Bethel and Dan). *Hammizbēāch*, therefore, both here and at Ezek. ix. 2, is the altar of burnt-offering in the temple at Jerusalem, the sanctuary of the whole of the covenant nation, to which even the ten tribes still belonged, in spite of their having fallen away from the house of David. So long as the Lord still continued to send prophets to the ten tribes, so long did they pass as still forming part of the people of God, and so long also was the temple at Jerusalem the divinely appointed sanctuary and the throne of Jehovah, from which both blessings and punishment issued for them. The Lord roars from Zion, and from Zion He utters His voice (ch. i. 2), not only upon the nations who have shown hostility to Judah or Israel, but also upon Judah and Israel, on account of their departure from His law (ch. ii. 4 and 6 sqq.).

The vision in this verse is founded upon the idea that the



whole nation is assembled before the Lord at the threshold of the temple, so that it is buried under the ruins of the falling building, in consequence of the blow upon the top, which shatters the temple to its very foundations. The Lord appears at the altar, because here at the sacrificial place of the nation the sins of Israel are heaped up, that He may execute judgment upon the nation there. נָצַב עַל, standing at (not upon) the altar, as in 1 Kings xiii. 1. He gives commandment to smite the top. The person who is to do this is not mentioned; but it was no doubt an angel, probably the מַלְאָךְ הַמְּשִׁיחִית, who brought the pestilence as a punishment at the numbering of the people in the time of David (2 Sam. xxiv. 15, 16), who smote the army of the Assyrian king Sennacherib before Jerusalem (2 Kings xix. 35), and who also slew the first-born of Egypt (Ex. xii. 13, 23); whereas in Ezek. ix. 2, 7, He is represented as accomplishing the judgment of destruction by means of six angels. *Hakkaphtôr*, the knob or top; in Ex. xxv. 31, 33 sqq., an ornament upon the shaft and branches of the golden candlestick. Here it is an ornament at the top of the columns, and not "the lintel of the door," or "the pinnacle of the temple with its ornaments." For the latter explanation of *kaphthôr*, which cannot be philologically sustained, by no means follows from the fact that the antithesis to the *kaphthôr* is formed by the *sippîm*, or thresholds of the door. The knob and threshold simply express the contrast between the loftiest summit and the lowest base, without at all warranting the conclusion that *saph* denotes the base of the pillar which culminated in a knob, or *kaphthôr*, the top of the door which rested upon a threshold. The description is not architectural, but rhetorical, the separate portions of the whole being individualized, for the purpose of expressing the thought that the building was to be shattered to pieces *in summo usque ad imum, a capite ad calcem*. Would we bring out more clearly the idea which lies at the foundation of the rhetorical mode of expression, we have only to think of the capital of the pillars Jachin and Boaz, and that with special reference to their significance, as symbolizing the stability of the temple. The smiting of these pillars, so that they fall to the ground, individualizes the destruction of the temple, without there being any necessity in consequence to think of these pillars as supporting the roof of the temple hall. The

rhetorical character of the expression comes out clearly again in what follows, "and smash them to pieces, *i.e.* lay them in ruins upon the head of all,"<sup>1</sup> where the plural suffix attached to **רָצַח** (with the toneless suffix for **רָצַח**; see Ewald, § 253, a) cannot possibly be taken as referring to the singular *hakkaphṭōr*, nor even to *hassippīm* alone, but must refer to the two nouns *hakkaphṭōr* and *hassippīm*. The reference to *hassippīm* could no doubt be grammatically sustained; but so far as the sense is concerned, it is inadmissible, inasmuch as when a building falls to the ground in consequence of its having been laid in ruins by a blow from above, the thresholds of the entrance could not possibly fall upon the heads of the men who were standing in front of it. The command has throughout a symbolical meaning, and has no literal reference to the destruction of the temple. The temple symbolizes the kingdom of God, which the Lord had founded in Israel; and as being the centre of that kingdom, it stands here for the kingdom itself. In the temple, as the dwelling-place of the name of Jehovah, *i.e.* of the gracious presence of God, the idolatrous nation beheld an indestructible pledge of the lasting continuance of the kingdom. But this support to their false trust is taken away from it by the announcement that the Lord will lay the temple in ruins. The destruction of the temple represents the destruction of the kingdom of God embodied in the temple, with which indeed the earthly temple would of necessity fall to the ground. No one will escape this judgment. This is affirmed in the words which follow: And their last, their remnant (*ʿachārith*, as in ch. iv. 2), I will slay with the sword; as to the meaning of which Cocceius has correctly observed, that the magnitude of the slaughter is increased *exclusionē fugientium et eorum, qui videbantur effugisse*. The apparent discrepancy in the statement, that they will *all* be crushed to pieces by the ruins, and yet there will be fugitives and persons who have escaped, is removed at once if we bear in mind that the intention of the prophet is to cut off every loophole for carnal security, and that the meaning of the words is simply this: "And even if any should succeed in fleeing and

<sup>1</sup> Luther's rendering, "for their avarice shall come upon the head of all of them," in which he follows the Vulgate, arose from **רָצַח** being confounded with **רָצַח**.

escaping, God will pursue them with the sword, and slay them" (see Hengstenberg, *Christology*, on this passage).

The thought is still further expanded in vers. 2-6. Ver. 2. "*If they break through into hell, my hand will take them thence; and if they climb up to heaven, thence will I fetch them down.*" Ver. 3. "*And if they hide themselves upon the top of Carmel, I will trace them, and fetch them thence; and if they conceal themselves from before mine eyes in the bottom of the sea, thence do I command the serpent, and it biteth them.*" Ver. 4. "*And if they go into captivity before their enemies, I will command the sword thence, and it slayeth them; and I direct my eye upon them for evil, and not for good.*" The imperfects, with  $\text{נִסְּ$ , are to be taken as futures. They do not assume what is impossible as merely hypothetical, in the sense of "if they should hide themselves;" but set forth what was no doubt in actual fact an impossible case, as though it were possible, in order to cut off every escape. For the cases mentioned in vers. 3a and 4a might really occur. Hiding upon Carmel and going into captivity belong to the sphere of possibility and of actual occurrence. In order to individualize the thought, that escape from the punishing arm of the Almighty is impossible, the prophet opposes the most extreme spaces of the world to one another, starting from heaven and hell, as the loftiest height and deepest depth of the universe, in doing which he has in all probability Ps. cxxxix. 7, 8 floating before his mind. He commences with the height, which a man cannot possibly climb, and the depth, to which he cannot descend, to show that escape is impossible.  $\text{נִסְּ}$ , to break through, with  $\text{ב}$ , to make a hole into anything (Ezek. viii. 8, xii. 5, 7). According to the Hebrew view, Sheol was deep in the interior of the earth. The head of Carmel is mentioned (see at Josh. xix. 26). The reference is not to the many caves in this promontory, which afford shelter to fugitives; for they are not found upon the head of Carmel, but for the most part on the western side (see v. Raumer, *Pal.* p. 44). The emphasis lies rather upon the head, as a height overgrown with trees, which, even if not very high (about 1800 feet; see at 1 Kings xviii. 19), yet, in comparison with the sea over which it rises, might appear to be of a very considerable height; in addition to which, the situation of Carmel, on the extreme western border of the kingdom of Israel, might also

be taken into consideration. "Whoever hides himself there, must assuredly know of no other place of security in the whole of the land besides. And if there is no longer any security there, there is nothing left but the sea." But even the deep sea-bottom will not shelter from the vengeance of God. God commands the serpent, or summons the serpent to bite him. *Náchásh*, here the water-serpent, called elsewhere *livyāthān* or *tannīn* (Isa. xxvii. 1), a sea-monster, which was popularly supposed to be extremely dangerous, but which cannot be more exactly defined. Even by going into captivity, they will not be protected from the sword. 'שָׁבִי, not into captivity, but *in statu captivitatis*: even if they should be among those who were wandering into captivity, where men are generally sure of their lives (see Lam. i. 5). For God has fixed His eye upon them, *i.e.* has taken them under His special superintendence (cf. Jer. xxxix. 12); not, however, to shelter, to protect, and to bless, but לְרָעָה, for evil, *i.e.* to punish them. "The people of the Lord remain, under all circumstances, the object of special attention. They are more richly blessed than the world, but they are also more severely punished" (Hengstenberg).

To strengthen this threat, Amos proceeds, in vers. 5, 6, to describe Jehovah as the Lord of heaven and earth, who sends judgments upon the earth with omnipotent power. Ver. 5. "And the Lord Jehovah of hosts, who toucheth the earth, and it melteth, and all the inhabitants thereupon mourn; and the whole of it riseth like the Nile, and sinketh like the Nile of Egypt. Ver. 6. Who buildeth His stories in heaven, and His vault, over the earth hath He founded it; who calleth to the waters of the sea, and poureth them out over the earth: Jehovah is His name." This description of God, who rules with omnipotence, is appended, as in ch. iv. 13 and v. 8, without any link of connection whatever. We must not render it, "The Lord Jehovah of hosts is He who toucheth the earth;" but we must supply the connecting thought, "And He who thus directeth His eye upon you is the Lord Jehovah of hosts, who toucheth the earth, and it melteth." The melting or dissolving of the earth is, according to Ps. xlv. 7, an effect produced by the Lord, who makes His voice heard in judgments, or "the destructive effect of the judgments of God, whose instruments the conquerors are" (Hengstenberg), when nations reel and kingdoms totter. The

Lord therefore touches the earth, so that it melts, when He dissolves the stability of the earth by great judgments (cf. Ps. lxxv. 4). "Israel could not fail to test the truth of these words by painful experience, when the wild hordes of Assyria poured themselves over the western parts of Asia" (Hengstenberg). The following words, depicting the dissolution of the earth, are repeated, with very inconsiderable alterations, from ch. viii. 8: we have merely the omission of וַיִּנְרֶשֶׁת, and the *kal* שִׁקְעָה substituted for the *niphal* נִשְׁקָה. In ver. 6 there is evidently an allusion to the flood. God, who is enthroned in heaven, in the cloud-towers built above the circle of the earth, possesses the power to pour the waves of the sea over the earth by His simple word. *Ma'aloth* is synonymous with עֲלִיּוֹת in Ps. civ. 3: upper rooms, *lit.* places to which one has to ascend. 'Aguddáh, an arch or vault: that which is called *râqîa'*, the firmament, in other places. The heaven, in which God builds His stories, is the heaven of clouds; and the vault, according to Gen. i. 7, is the firmament of heaven, which divided the water above the firmament from the water beneath it. Consequently the upper rooms of God are the waters above the firmament, in or out of which God builds His stories (Ps. civ. 3), *i.e.* the cloud-tower above the horizon of the earth, which is raised above it like a vault. Out of this cloud-castle the rain pours down (Ps. civ. 13); and out of its open windows the waters of the flood poured down, and overflowed the earth (Gen. vii. 11). When God calls to the waters of the sea, they pour themselves over the surface of the earth. The waves of the sea are a figurative representation of the agitated multitude of nations, or of the powers of the world, which pour their waves over the kingdom of God (see at ch. vii. 4).

The Lord will pour out these floods upon sinful Israel, because it stands nearer to Him than the heathen do. Ver. 7. "*Are ye not like the sons of the Cushites to me, ye sons of Israel? is the saying of Jehovah. Have I not brought Israel up out of the land of Egypt, and the Philistines out of Caphtor, and Aram out of Kir?*" With these words the prophet tears away from the sinful nation the last support of its carnal security, namely, reliance upon its election as the nation of God, which the Lord has practically confirmed by leading Israel up out of Egypt. Their election as the people of Jehovah was unquestionably a

pledge that the Lord would not cast off His people, or suffer them to be destroyed by the heathen. But what the apostle says of circumcision in Rom. ii. 25 applied to this election also, namely, that it was of benefit to none but those who kept the law. It afforded a certainty of divine protection simply to those who proved themselves to be the children of Israel by their walk and conduct, and who faithfully adhered to the Lord. To the rebellious it was of no avail. Idolaters had become like the heathen. The Cushites are mentioned, not so much as being descendants of the accursed Ham, as on account of the blackness of their skin, which was regarded as a symbol of spiritual blackness (cf. Jer. xiii. 23). The expression "*sons (children) of the Cushites*" is used with reference to the title "*sons (children) of Israel*," the honourable name of the covenant nation. For degenerate Israel, the leading up out of Egypt had no higher signification than the leading up of the Philistines and Syrians out of their former dwelling-places into the lands which they at present inhabited. These two peoples are mentioned by way of example: the Philistines, because they were despised by the Israelites, as being uncircumcised; the Syrians, with an allusion to the threat in ch. i. 5, that they should wander into exile to Kir. On the fact that the Philistines sprang from Caphtor, see the comm. on Gen. x. 14.

Election, therefore, will not save sinful Israel from destruction. After Amos has thus cut off all hope of deliverance from the ungodly, he repeats, in his own words in vers. 8 sqq., the threat already exhibited symbolically in ver. 1. Ver. 8. "*Behold, the eyes of the Lord Jehovah are against the sinful kingdom, and I destroy it from off the face of the earth; except that I shall not utterly destroy the house of Jacob: is the saying of Jehovah.*" Ver. 9. "*For, behold, I command, and shake the house of Israel among all nations, as (corn) is shaken in a sieve, and not even a little grain falls to the ground.*" Ver. 10. "*All the sinners of my people will die by the sword, who say, The evil will not overtake or come to us.*" The sinful kingdom is Israel; not merely the kingdom of the ten tribes however, but all Israel, the kingdom of the ten tribes along with Judah, the house of Jacob or Israel, which is identical with the sons of Israel, who had become like the Cushites, although Amos had chiefly the people and kingdom of the ten tribes in his mind. *Bammamlâkhâh*, not upon

the kingdom, but against the kingdom. The directing of the eye upon an object is expressed by  $\text{עַל}$  (ver. 4) or  $\text{לִפְנֵי}$  (cf. Ps. xxxiv. 16); whereas  $\text{בְּ}$  is used in relation to the object upon which anger rests (Ps. xxxiv. 17). Because the Lord had turned His eye towards the sinful kingdom, He must exterminate it,—a fate with which Moses had already threatened the nation in Deut. vi. 15. Nevertheless ( $\text{כִּי}$   $\text{אֲנִי}$ , “only that,” introducing the limitation, as in Num. xiii. 28, Deut. xv. 4) the house of Jacob, the covenant nation, shall not be utterly destroyed. The “house of Jacob” is opposed to the “sinful nation;” not, however, so that the antithesis simply lies in the kingdom and people (*regnum delebo, non populum*), or that the “house of Jacob” signifies the kingdom of Judah as distinguished from the kingdom of the ten tribes, for the “house of Jacob” is perfectly equivalent to the “house of Israel” (ver. 9). The house of Jacob is not to be utterly destroyed, but simply to be shaken, as it were, in a sieve. The antithesis lies in the predicate  $\text{הַמְּלָכִיּוֹת}$ , the *sinful* kingdom. So far as Israel, as a kingdom and people, is sinful, it is to be destroyed from off the face of the earth. But there is always a divine kernel in the nation, by virtue of its divine election, a holy seed out of which the Lord will form a new and holy people and kingdom of God. Consequently the destruction will not be a total one,  $\text{אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁמְרֵם}$ . The reason for this is introduced by  $\text{כִּי}$  (for) in ver. 9. The Lord will shake Israel among the nations, as corn is shaken in a sieve; so that the chaff flies away, and the dust and dirt fall to the ground, and only the good grains are left in the sieve. Such a sieve are the nations of the world, through which Israel is purified from its chaff, *i.e.* from its ungodly members. *Ts'rōr*, generally a bundle; here, according to its etymology, that which is compact or firm, *i.e.* solid grain as distinguished from loose chaff. In 2 Sam. xvii. 13 it is used in a similar sense to denote a hard piece of clay or a stone in a building. Not a single grain will fall to the ground, that is to say, not a good man will be lost (cf. 1 Sam. xxvi. 20). The self-secure sinners, however, who rely upon their outward connection with the nation of God (compare ver. 7 and ch. iii. 2), or upon their zeal in the outward forms of worship (ch. v. 21 sqq.), and fancy that the judgment cannot touch them ( $\text{הַקָּדִים בְּעֵד}$ , to come to meet a person round about him, *i.e.* to

come upon him from every side), will all perish by the sword. This threat is repeated at the close, without any formal link of connection with ver. 9, not only to prevent any abuse of the foregoing modification of the judgment, but also to remove this apparent discrepancy, that whereas in vers. 1-4 it is stated that not one will escape the judgment, according to ver. 8b, the nation of Israel is not to be utterly destroyed. In order to anticipate the frivolity of the ungodly, who always flatter themselves with the hope of escaping when there is a threatening of any general calamity, the prophet first of all cuts off all possibilities whatever in vers. 1-4, without mentioning the exceptions; and it is not till afterwards that the promise is introduced that the house of Israel shall not be utterly annihilated, whereby the general threat is limited to sinners, and the prospect of deliverance and preservation through the mercy of God is opened to the righteous. The historical realization or fulfilment of this threat took place, so far as Israel of the ten tribes was concerned, when their kingdom was destroyed by the Assyrians, and in the case of Judah, at the overthrow of the kingdom and temple by the Chaldeans; and the shaking of Israel in the sieve is still being fulfilled upon the Jews who are dispersed among all nations.

Vers. 11-15. THE KINGDOM OF GOD SET UP.—Since God, as the unchangeable One, cannot utterly destroy His chosen people, and abolish or reverse His purpose of salvation, after destroying the sinful kingdom, He will set up the new and genuine kingdom of God. Ver. 11. *“On that day will I set up the fallen hut of David, and wall up their rents; and what is destroyed thereof I will set up, and build it as in the days of eternity.”* Ver. 12. *“That they may take possession of the remnant of Edom, and all the nations upon which my name shall be called, is the saying of Jehovah, who doeth such things.”* “In that day,” i.e. when the judgment has fallen upon the sinful kingdom, and all the sinners of the people of Jehovah are destroyed. *Sukkâh*, a hut, indicates, by way of contrast to *bayith*, the house or palace which David built for himself upon Zion (2 Sam. v. 11), a degenerate condition of the royal house of David. This is placed beyond all doubt by the predicate *nōpheleth*, fallen down. As the stately palace supplies a figurative representa-



tion of the greatness and might of the kingdom, so does the fallen hut, which is full of rents and near to destruction, symbolize the utter ruin of the kingdom. If the family of David no longer dwells in a palace, but in a miserable fallen hut, its regal sway must have come to an end. The figure of the stem of Jesse that is hewn down, in Isa. xi. 1, is related to this; except that the former denotes the decline of the Davidic dynasty, whereas the fallen hut represents the fall of the kingdom. There is no need to prove, however, that this does not apply to the decay of the Davidic house by the side of the great power of Jeroboam (Hitzig, Hofmann), least of all under Uzziah, in whose reign the kingdom of Judah reached the summit of its earthly power and glory. The kingdom of David first became a hut when the kingdom of Judah was overcome by the Chaldeans,—an event which is included in the prediction contained in vers. 1 sqq., and hinted at even in ch. ii. 5. But this hut the Lord will raise up again from its fallen condition. This raising up is still further defined in the three following clauses: "I wall up their rents" (*pirtsēhen*). The plural suffix can only be explained from the fact that *sukkāh* actually refers to the kingdom of God, which was divided into two kingdoms ("these kingdoms," ch. vi. 2), and that the house of Israel, which was not to be utterly destroyed (ver. 8), consisted of the remnant of the people of the two kingdoms, or the ἐκλογή of the twelve tribes; so that in the expression גִּרְרֵי פִרְצֵיהֶן there is an allusion to the fact that the now divided nation would one day be united again under the one king David, as Hosea (ch. ii. 2, iii. 5) and Ezekiel (ch. xxxvii. 22) distinctly prophesy. The correctness of this explanation of the plural suffix is confirmed by הִרְכַּתִּי in the second clause, the suffix of which refers to David, under whom the destroyed kingdom would rise into new power. And whilst these two clauses depict the restoration of the kingdom from its fallen condition, in the third clause its further preservation is foretold. בָּנָה does not mean to "build" here, but to finish building, to carry on, enlarge, and beautify the building. The words בְּיָמֵי עוֹלָם (an abbreviated comparison for "as it was in the days of the olden time") point back to the promise in 2 Sam. vii. 11, 12, 16, that God would build a house for David, would raise up his seed after him, and firmly establish his throne for ever, that his house and his

kingdom should endure for ever before Him, upon which the whole of the promise before us is founded. The days of the rule of David and of his son Solomon are called "days of eternity," i.e. of the remotest past (compare Mic. vii. 14), to show that a long period would intervene between that time and the predicted restoration. The rule of David had already received a considerable blow through the falling away of the ten tribes. And it would fall still deeper in the future; but, according to the promise in 2 Sam. vii., it would not utterly perish, but would be raised up again from its fallen condition. It is not expressly stated that this will take place through a shoot from its own stem; but that is implied in the fact itself. The kingdom of David could only be raised up again through an offshoot from David's family. And that this can be no other than the Messiah, was unanimously acknowledged by the earlier Jews, who even formed a name for the Messiah out of this passage, viz. בֶּר נְאֻמִּים, *filius cadentium*, He who had sprung from a fallen hut (see the proofs in Hengstenberg's *Christology*, vol. i. p. 386 transl.). The kingdom of David is set up in order that they (the sons of Israel, who have been proved to be corn by the sifting, ver. 9) may take possession of the remnant of Edom and all the nations, etc. The Edomites had been brought into subjection by David, who had taken possession of their land. At a late period, when the hut of David was beginning to fall, they had recovered their freedom again. This does not suffice, however, to explain the allusion to Edom here; for David had also brought the Philistines, the Moabites, the Ammonites, and the Aramæans into subjection to his sceptre,—all of them nations who had afterwards recovered their freedom, and to whom Amos foretels the coming judgment in ch. i. The reason why Edom alone is mentioned by name must be sought for, therefore, in the peculiar attitude which Edom assumed towards the people of God, namely, in the fact "that whilst they were related to the Judæans, they were of all nations the most hostile to them" (Rosenmüller). On this very ground Obadiah predicted that judgment would come upon the Edomites, and that the remnant of Esau would be captured by the house of Jacob. Amos speaks here of the "remnant of Edom," not because Amaziah recovered only a portion of Edom to the kingdom (2 Kings xiv. 7), as Hitzig

supposes, but with an allusion to the threat in ch. i. 12, that Edom would be destroyed with the exception of a remnant. The "remnant of Edom" consists of those who are saved in the judgments that fall upon Edom. This also applies to *בְּלִיְהוּדִים*. Even of these nations, only those are taken by Israel, i.e. incorporated into the restored kingdom of David, the Messianic kingdom, upon whom the name of Jehovah is called; that is to say, not those who were first brought under the dominion of the nation in the time of David (Hitzig, Baur, and Hofmann), but those to whom He shall have revealed His divine nature, and manifested Himself as a God and Saviour (compare Isa. lxiii. 19, Jer. xiv. 9, and the remarks on Deut. xxviii. 10), so that this expression is practically the same as *אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָא יְהוָה לְקָרָא* (whom Jehovah shall call) in Joel iii. 5. The perfect *קָרָא* acquires the sense of the *futurum exactum* from the leading sentence, as in Deut. xxviii. 10 (see Ewald, § 346, c). *וְיִרְשׁוּ*, to take possession of, is chosen with reference to the prophecy of Balaam (Num. xxiv. 18), that Edom should be the possession of Israel (see the comm. on this passage). Consequently the taking possession referred to here will be of a very different character from the subjugation of Edom and other nations to David. It will make the nations into citizens of the kingdom of God, to whom the Lord manifests Himself as their God, pouring upon them all the blessings of His covenant of grace (see Isa. lvi. 6-8). To strengthen this promise, *נָאמַר יְהוָה וְנַעֲשֶׂה* ("saith Jehovah, that doeth this") is appended. He who says this is the Lord, who will also accomplish it (see Jer. xxxiii. 2).

The explanation given above is also in harmony with the use made by James of our prophecy in Acts xv. 16, 17, where he derives from vers. 11 and 12 a prophetic testimony to the fact that Gentiles who became believers were to be received into the kingdom of God without circumcision. It is true that at first sight James appears to quote the words of the prophet simply as a prophetic declaration in support of the fact related by Peter, namely, that by giving His Holy Spirit to believers from among the Gentiles as well as to believers from among the Jews, without making any distinction between Jews and Gentiles, God had taken out of the Gentiles a people *ἐκ τῶ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ*, "upon His name" (compare Acts xv. 14 with Acts xv. 8, 9). But as both James and Peter recognise in

this fact a practical declaration on the part of God that circumcision was not a necessary prerequisite to the reception of the Gentiles into the kingdom of Christ, while James follows up the allusion to this fact with the prophecy of Amos, introducing it with the words, "and to this agree the words of the prophets," there can be no doubt that James also quotes the words of the prophet with the intention of adducing evidence out of the Old Testament in support of the reception of the Gentiles into the kingdom of God without circumcision. But this proof is not furnished by the statement of the prophet, "through its silence as to the condition required by those who were pharisaically disposed" (Hengstenberg); and still less by the fact that it declares in the most striking way "what significance there was in the typical kingdom of David, as a prophecy of the relation in which the human race, outside the limits of Israel, would stand to the kingdom of Christ" (Hofmann, *Schriftbeweis*, ii. 2, pp. 84, 85). For the passage would contain nothing extraordinary concerning the typical significance possessed by the kingdom of David in relation to the kingdom of Christ, if, as Hofmann says (p. 84), the prophet, instead of enumerating all the nations which once belonged to the kingdom of David, simply mentions Edom by name, and describes all the others as the nations which have been subject like Edom to the name of Jehovah. The demonstrative force of the prophet's statement is to be found, no doubt, as Hofmann admits, in the words כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָא שְׁמִי עֲלֵיהֶם. But if these words affirmed nothing more than what Hofmann finds in them—namely, that all the nations subdued by David were subjected to the name of Jehovah; or, as he says at p. 83, "made up, in connection with Israel, the kingdom of Jehovah and His anointed, without being circumcised, or being obliged to obey the law of Israel"—their demonstrative force would simply lie in what they do not affirm,—namely, in the fact that they say nothing whatever about circumcision being a condition of the reception of the Gentiles. The circumstance that the heathen nations which David brought into subjection to his kingdom were made tributary to himself and subject to the name of Jehovah, might indeed be typical of the fact that the kingdom of the second David would also spread over the Gentiles; but, according to this explanation, it would affirm nothing at all as to the internal relation of the Gentiles to Israel in the

new kingdom of God. The Apostle James, however, quotes the words of Amos as decisive on the point in dispute, which the apostles were considering, because in the words, "all the nations upon whom my name is called," he finds a prediction of what Peter has just related,—namely, that the Lord has taken out of the heathen a people "upon His name," that is to say, because he understands by the calling of the name of the Lord upon the Gentiles the communication of the Holy Ghost to the Gentiles.<sup>1</sup>

To the setting up of the kingdom and its outward extension the prophet appends its inward glorification, foretelling the richest blessing of the land (ver. 13) and of the nation (ver. 14), and lastly, the eternal duration of the kingdom (ver. 15). Ver. 13. *"Behold, days come, is the saying of Jehovah, that the ploughman reaches to the reaper, and the treader of grapes to the sower of seed; and the mountains drip new wine, and all the hills melt away."* Ver. 14. *"And I reverse the captivity of my people Israel, and they build the waste cities, and dwell, and plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; and make gardens, and eat the fruit thereof."* Ver. 15. *"And I plant them in their land, and they shall no more be torn up out of their land which I have given them, saith Jehovah thy God."* In the new kingdom of God the people of the Lord will enjoy the blessing, which Moses promised to Israel when faithful to the covenant. This blessing will be poured upon the land in which the kingdom is set up. Ver. 13a is formed after the promise in Lev. xxvi. 5, "Your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing-time;" but Amos transfers the action to the

<sup>1</sup> Moreover, James (or Luke) quotes the words of Amos according to the LXX., even in their deviations from the Hebrew text, in the words ὅπως ἂν ἐκζητήσωσιν οἱ κατάλοιποι τῶν ἀνθρώπων με (for which Luke has τὸν κύριον, according to Cod. Al.), which rest upon an interchange of לָמַעַן with יִרְשׁוּ אֶת־שְׂאֵרֵי אָדָם; because the thought upon which it turned was not thereby altered, inasmuch as the possession of the Gentiles, of which the prophet is speaking, is the spiritual sway of the people of the Lord, which can only extend over those who seek the Lord and His kingdom. The other deviations from the original text and from the LXX. (compare Acts xv. 16 with Amos ix. 11) may be explained on the ground that the apostle is quoting from memory, and that he alters ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ ἀναστήσω into μετὰ ταῦτα ἀναστήψω καὶ ἀνοικοδομήσω, to give greater clearness to the allusion contained in the prophecy to the Messianic times.


persons employed, and says, "The ploughman will reach to the reaper." Even while the one is engaged in ploughing the land for the sowing, the other will already be able to cut ripe corn; so quickly will the corn grow and ripen. And the treading of the grapes will last to the sowing-time, so abundant will the vintage be. The second half of the verse is taken from Joel iv. 18; and according to this passage, the melting of the hills is to be understood as dissolving into streams of milk, new wine, and honey, in which the prophet had the description of the promised land as a land flowing with milk and honey (Ex. iii. 8, etc.) floating before his mind. In the land so blessed will Israel enjoy unbroken peace, and delight itself in the fruits of its inheritance. On שָׁנָה אֶת-שָׁבוֹת, see the exposition of Hos. vi. 11. That this phrase is not used here to denote the return of the people from captivity, but the turning of misfortune and misery into prosperity and salvation, is evident from the context; for Israel cannot be brought back out of captivity *after* it has already taken possession of the Gentiles (ver. 12). The thought of ver. 14, as attached to ver. 13, is the following: As the land of Israel, *i.e.* the territory of the re-erected kingdom of David, will no more be smitten with the curse of drouth and failing crops with which the rebellious are threatened, but will receive the blessing of the greatest fertility, so will the people, *i.e.* the citizens of this kingdom, be no more visited with calamity and judgment, but enjoy the rich beneficent fruits of their labour in blessed and unbroken peace. This thought is individualized with a retrospective glance at the punishment with which the sinners are threatened in ch. v. 11, —namely, as building waste cities, and dwelling therein, and as drinking the wine of the vineyards that have been planted; not building houses for others any more, as was threatened in ch. v. 11, after Deut. xxviii. 30, 39; and lastly, as laying out gardens, and eating the fruit thereof, without its being consumed by strangers (Deut. xxviii. 33). This blessing will endure for ever (ver. 15). Their being planted in their land denotes, not the settling of the people in their land once more, but their firm and lasting establishment and fortification therein. The Lord will make Israel, *i.e.* His rescued people, into a plantation that will never be torn up again, but strikes firm roots, sends forth blossom, and produces fruit. The words point back

to 2 Sam. vii. 10, and declare that the firm planting of Israel which was begun by David will be completed with the raising up of the fallen hut of David, inasmuch as no further driving away of the nation into captivity will occur, but the people of the Lord will dwell for ever in the land which their God has given them. Compare Jer. xxiv. 6. This promise is sealed by אָמַר יי' אֵל.

We have not to seek for the realization of this promise in the return of Israel from its captivity to Palestine under Zerubbabel and Ezra; for this was no planting of Israel to dwell for ever in the land, nor was it a setting up of the fallen hut of David. Nor have we to transfer the fulfilment to the future, and think of a time when the Jews, who have been converted to their God and Saviour Jesus Christ, will one day be led back to Palestine. For, as we have already observed at Joel iii. 18, Canaan and Israel are types of the kingdom of God and of the church of the Lord. The raising up of the fallen hut of David commenced with the coming of Christ and the founding of the Christian church by the apostles; and the possession of Edom and all the other nations upon whom the Lord reveals His name, took its rise in the reception of the Gentiles into the kingdom of heaven set up by Christ. The founding and building of this kingdom continue through all the ages of the Christian church, and will be completed when the fulness of the Gentiles shall one day enter into the kingdom of God, and the still unbelieving Israel shall have been converted to Christ. The land which will flow with streams of divine blessing is not Palestine, but the domain of the Christian church, or the earth, so far as it has received the blessings of Christianity. The people which cultivates this land is the Christian church, so far as it stands in living faith, and produces fruits of the Holy Ghost. The blessing foretold by the prophet is indeed visible at present in only a very small measure, because Christendom is not yet so pervaded by the Spirit of the Lord, as that it forms a holy people of God. In many respects it still resembles Israel, which the Lord will have to sift by means of judgments. This sifting will be first brought to an end through the judgment upon all nations, which will attend the second coming of Christ. Then will the earth become a Canaan, where the Lord will dwell in His glorified kingdom in the midst of His sanctified people.

# O B A D I A H.

## INTRODUCTION.

S to the *person* and *circumstances* of Obadiah, nothing certain is known, since the heading to his prophecy simply contains the name עֲבַדְיָה, *i.e.* servant, worshipper of Jehovah ('Οβδίου *al.* 'Αβδίου, *sc.* ὄρασις, LXX.), and does not even mention his father's name. The name *Obadiah* frequently occurs in its earlier form '*Obadyāhū*. This was the name of a pious governor of the palace under king Ahab (1 Kings xviii. 3 sqq.), of a prince of Judah under Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. xvii. 7), of a brave Gadite under David (1 Chron. xii. 9), of a Benjamite (1 Chron. viii. 38), of an Issacharite (1 Chron. vii. 3), of a Zebulunite (1 Chron. xxvii. 19), of several Levites (1 Chron. ix. 16, 44; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 12), and of different men after the captivity (1 Chron. iii. 21; Ezra viii. 9; Neh. x. 6). The traditional accounts of our prophet in the rabbins and fathers, some of whom identify him with Ahab's pious commander of the castle, others with the third captain sent by Ahaziah against Elisha (2 Kings i. 13), whilst others again make him an Edomitish proselyte (see Carpzov, *Introd.* p. 332 sqq., and Delitzsch, *de Habacuci vita atque ætate*, pp. 60, 61), are quite worthless, and evidently false, and have merely originated in the desire to know something more about him than the simple name (see C. P. Caspari, *Der Proph. Ob.* pp. 2, 3).

The *writing* of Obadiah contains but one single prophecy concerning the relation in which Edom stood to the people of God. It commences with the proclamation of the destruction with which the Lord has determined to visit the Edomites, who rely upon the impregnability of their rocky seat (vers. 1-9); and then depicts, as the cause of the divine judgment which



will thus suddenly burst upon the haughty people, the evil which it did to Jacob, the covenant nation, when Judah and Jerusalem had been taken by heathen nations, who not only plundered them, but shamefully desecrated the mountain of Zion (vers. 10-14). For this the Edomites and all nations will receive retribution, even to their utter destruction in the approaching day of the Lord (vers. 15, 16). But upon Mount Zion there will be delivered ones, and the mountain will be holy. The house of Jacob will take possession of the settlement of the Gentiles, and, in common with Israel, will destroy the Edomites, and extend its territory on all sides (vers. 17-19). That portion of the nation which has been scattered about in heathen lands will return to their enlarged fatherland (ver. 20). Upon Mount Zion will saviours arise to judge Edom, and the kingdom will then be the Lord's (ver. 21). This brief statement of the contents is sufficient to show that Obadiah's prophecy does not consist of a mere word of threatening directed against Edom, or treat of so special a theme as that his *cházon* could be compared to Ahijah's *n'bhū'āh*, and Yehdi's (Iddo's) *cházōth* against Jeroboam I. (2 Chron. ix. 29); but that Obadiah takes the general attitude of Edom towards the people of Jehovah as the groundwork of his prophecy, regards the judgment upon Edom as one feature in the universal judgment upon all nations (cf. vers. 15, 16), proclaims in the destruction of the power of Edom the overthrow of the power of all nations hostile to God, and in the final elevation and re-establishment of Israel in the holy land foretels the completion of the sovereignty of Jehovah, *i.e.* of the kingdom of God, as dominion over all nations; so that we may say with Hengstenberg, that "Obadiah makes the judgment upon the Gentiles and the restoration of Israel the leading object of his prophetic painting." Through this universal standpoint, from which Edom is taken as a representative of the ungodly power of the world, Obadiah rises far above the utterances of the earlier prophets contained in the historical books of the Old Testament, and stands on a level with the prophets, who composed prophetic writings of their own for posterity, as well as for their own age; so that, notwithstanding the small space occupied by his prophecy, it has very properly had a place assigned it in the prophetic literature. At the same time, we cannot agree with

Hengstenberg, who gives the following interpretation to this view of the attitude of Edom towards the people of God, namely, that Obadiah simply adduces Edom as an example of what he has to say with regard to the heathen world, with its enmity against God, and as to the form which the relation between Israel and the heathen world would eventually assume, and therefore that his prophecy simply individualizes the thought of the universal dominion of the kingdom of God which would follow the deepest degradation of the people of God, the fullest and truest realization of which dominion is to be sought for in Christ, and that the germ of his prophecy is contained in Joel iii. 19, where Edom is introduced as an individualized example and type of the heathen world with its hostility to God, which is to be judged by the Lord after the judgment upon Judah. For, apart from the fact that Obadiah does not presuppose Joel, but *vice versa*, as we shall presently see, this mode of idealizing our prophecy cannot be reconciled with its concrete character and expression, or raised into a truth by any analogies in prophetic literature. All the prophecies are occasioned by distinct concrete relations and circumstances belonging to the age from which they spring. And even those which are occupied with the remote and remotest future, like Isa. xl.-lxvi. for example, form no real exception to this rule. Joel would not have mentioned Edom as the representation of the heathen world with its hostility to God (iii. 19), and Obadiah would not have predicted the destruction of Edom, if the Edomites had not displayed their implacable hatred to the people of God on one particular occasion in the most conspicuous manner. It is only in this way that we can understand the contents of the whole of Obadiah's prophecy, more especially the relation in which the third section (vers. 17-21) stands to the first two, and explain them without force.

The *time* of the prophet is so much a matter of dispute, that some regard him as the oldest of the twelve minor prophets, whilst others place him in the time of the captivity, and Hitzig even assigns him to the year 312 B.C., when prophecy had long been extinct. (For the different views, see my *Lehrbuch der Einleitung*, § 88.) That Obadiah does not belong to the prophets of the captivity, or to those after the captivity, but to the earlier prophets, may be generally inferred

from the position of his book in the collection of the twelve minor prophets; for although the collection is not strictly chronological, yet it is so arranged as a whole, that the writings of the captivity and the times after the captivity occupy the last places, whereas Obadiah stands among older prophets. More precise information may be obtained from the contents of his prophecy, more especially from the relation in which it stands on the one hand to the prophecy of Jeremiah (xlix. 7-22) concerning Edom, and on the other hand to the prophecy of Joel. Obadiah so thoroughly coincides with these in a number of characteristic thoughts and expressions, that the one must have known the other. If we examine, first of all, the relation which exists between Obadiah and Jeremiah (*l.c.*), there can be no doubt, (and since the thorough investigations of Caspari (p. 5 sqq.) it has been admitted by every one with the exception of Hitzig,) that Obadiah did not use Jeremiah, but that Jeremiah read and made use of Obadiah. This might indeed be conjectured from the peculiar characteristic of Jeremiah, namely, that he leans throughout upon the utterances of the earlier prophets, and reproduces their thoughts, figures, and words (see A. Kueper, *Jeremias librorum ss. interpres atque vindex*, 1837). Thus, for example, nearly all his prophecies against foreign nations are founded upon utterances of the earlier prophets: that against the Philistines (Jer. xlvii.) upon Isaiah's prophecy against that people (Isa. xiv. 28-32); that against the Moabites (Jer. xlviii.) upon that of Isaiah in ch. xv. xvi.; that against the Ammonites (Jer. xlix. 1-6) upon the prophecy of Amos against the same (Amos i. 13-15); that against Damascus (Jer. xlix. 23-27) upon that of Amos against this kingdom (Amos i. 3-5); and lastly, that against Babylon (Jer. l. li.) upon the prophecy of Isaiah against Babylon in Isa. xiii.-xiv. 23. To this we may add, (1) that the prophecy of Jeremiah against Edom contains a number of expressions peculiar to himself and characteristic of his style, not a single one of which is to be found in Obadiah, whilst nothing is met with elsewhere in Jeremiah of that which is common to Obadiah and him (for the proofs of this, see Caspari, pp. 7, 8); and (2) that what is common to the two prophets not only forms an outwardly connected passage in Obadiah, whereas in Jeremiah it occurs in several unconnected passages of his pro-

phcey (compare Obad. 1-8 with Jer. xlix. 7, 9, 10, 14-16), but, as the exposition will show, that in Obadiah it is more closely connected and apparently more original than in Jeremiah. But if it be a fact, as this unquestionably proves, that Obadiah's prophecy is more original, and therefore older, than that of Jeremiah, Obadiah cannot have prophesied after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, but must have prophesied before it, since Jeremiah's prophecy against Edom belongs to the fourth year of Jehoiakim (see Caspari, p. 14 sqq., and Graf's *Jeremias*, pp. 558-9, compared with p. 506).

The central section of Obadiah's prophecy (vers. 10-16) does not appear to harmonize with this result, inasmuch as the cause of the judgment with which the Edomites are threatened in vers. 1-9 is said to be their rejoicing over Judah and Jerusalem at the time of their calamity, when foreigners entered into his gates, and cast the lot upon Jerusalem; and they are charged not only with looking upon the destruction of the brother nation with contemptuous pleasure, but with taking part themselves in the plundering of Judah, and murdering the fugitives, or giving them up to their enemies. These reproaches unquestionably presuppose a conquest of Jerusalem by foreign nations; but whether it is the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, is by no means so certain as many commentators imagine. It is true that Caspari observes (p. 18), that "every one who reads these verses would naturally suppose that they refer to that catastrophe, and to the hostilities shown by the Edomites to the Judæans on that occasion, to which those prophets who lived after the destruction of Jerusalem, viz. Jeremiah (Lam. iv. 21, 22), Ezekiel (ch. xxxv.), and the author of Ps. cxxxvii., refer to some extent in almost the same words in which Obadiah speaks of them." But of the passages cited, Lam. iv. 21, 22 cannot be taken into account at all, since it simply contains the thought that the cup (of affliction) will also reach to the daughter of Edom; and that she will be intoxicated and stripped, and that Jehovah will punish her guilt. The other two are no doubt similar. The Psalmist in Ps. cxxxvii. utters this prayer in ver. 7: "Remember, Jehovah, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem, who say, Strip, strip (*i.e.* demolish) even to the foundation thereof;" and Ezekiel threatens Edom with everlasting desolation, because

it has cherished everlasting enmity, and given up the sons of Israel to the sword, *בְּעַת אִירָם בְּעַת עֵץ קֶץ* (ver. 5), because it has said, The two nations (Judah and Israel) shall be mine, we will take possession of them (ver. 10); because it has cherished hatred toward the sons of Israel, and spoken blasphemy against the mountains of Israel, and said they are laid waste, they are given to us for food (ver. 12); because it has taken pleasure in the desolation of the inheritance of the house of Israel (ver. 15). There is a most unambiguous allusion here to the desolating of Judah and the destruction of Jerusalem, and to the hostilities which the Edomites displayed when this calamity fell upon Judah. On the other hand, Obadiah does not hint at the destruction of Jerusalem in a single word. He neither speaks of the *everlasting* enmity of Edom, nor of the fact that it wanted to get possession of Judah and Israel for itself, but simply of the hostile behaviour of the Edomites towards the brother nation Judah, when enemies forced their way into Jerusalem and plundered its treasures, and the sons of Judah perished. Consequently Obadiah has before his eyes simply the conquest and plundering of Jerusalem by foreign, *i.e.* heathen foes, but not the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans. Even Caspari is obliged to admit, that there is no necessity to understand most (or more correctly "any") of the separate expressions of Obadiah as referring to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans; but, in his opinion, this allusion is required by "what is said in vers. 11-14 when taken all together, inasmuch as the prophet there describes the day of Jerusalem by the strongest possible names, following one upon another, as the day of his people's rejection, the day of their distress (twice), and the day of their calamity (three times)." But even this we cannot regard as well established, since neither *יּוֹם נִכְרָו* nor *יּוֹם אִירָו* designates the calamitous day as a day of rejection; and *יּוֹם אֶכְרֶם* cannot possibly denote the utter destruction of all the Judæans, but simply affirms that the sons of Judah perished *en masse*. The other epithets, *נִכְר*, *אִיר*, *צָרָה*, do not enable us to define more precisely the nature of the calamity which befel Judah at that time; and the crowding together of these expressions simply shows that the calamity was a very great one, and not that Jerusalem was destroyed and the kingdom of Judah dissolved.

But before the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, it was several times taken and plundered by foes: viz. (1) by Shishak king of Egypt in the fifth year of Rehoboam (1 Kings xiv. 25, 26; 2 Chron. xii. 2 sqq.); (2) by the Philistines and Arabians in the time of Jehoram (2 Chron. xxi. 16, 17); (3) by the Israelitish king Joash in the reign of Amaziah (2 Kings xiv. 13, 14; 2 Chron. xxv. 23, 24); (4) by the Chaldeans in the time of Jehoiakim (2 Kings xxiv. 1 sqq.; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 6, 7); and (5) by the Chaldeans again in the reign of Jehoiachin (2 Kings xxiv. 10 sqq.; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 10). Of these different conquests, the first can have no bearing upon the question before us, inasmuch as in the time of Rehoboam the Edomites were subject to the kingdom of Judah, and therefore could not have attempted to do what Obadiah says they did; nor can the two Babylonian conquests under Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin, inasmuch as, according to the relation in which Obadiah stood to Jeremiah, as shown above, he must have prophesied before they occurred; nor can the conquest in the reign of Amaziah, because Obadiah describes the enemies as *zârim* and *nokhrim* (strangers and foreigners), which clearly points to Gentile nations (compare Joel iii. 17; Lam. v. 2; Deut. xvii. 15), and does not apply to the citizens of the kingdom of the ten tribes. Consequently there only remains the taking of Jerusalem by the Philistines and Arabians in the time of Jehoram; and the relation in which Obadiah stood to Joel clearly points to this.

There is so remarkable a coincidence between vers. 10–18 of Obadiah and ch. ii. 32 and ch. iii. of Joel, in a very large number of words, expressions, and thoughts, considering the smallness of the two passages, and especially of that of Obadiah, that the dependence of one upon the other must be universally acknowledged.<sup>1</sup> But this dependence is not to be sought for on the side of Obadiah, as Caspari and others suppose; for the fact that Joel bears the stamp of originality in a greater degree than any other prophet, and the circumstance

<sup>1</sup> Compare מַחֲסֵם בְּנֵי יְהוּדָה in Ob. 10 with מַחֲסֵם בְּנֵי יְהוּדָה in Joel iii. 19; וְעַל יְרוּשָׁלַם יָדוּ גִזְרֵל in Ob. 11 with וְעַל יְרוּשָׁלַם יָדוּ גִזְרֵל in Joel iii. 3; בְּיָקָרוֹב יוֹם יִהְיֶה עַל כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם in Ob. 15 and בְּיָקָרוֹב יוֹם יִהְיֶה עַל כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם in Joel iii. 14, compare i. 15, ii. 1, and iii. 12,

that we meet with references to him in not a few of the later prophets from Amos onwards, furnish no evidence that will bear a moment's test. "The originality of Joel," as Delitzsch observes, "is no disproof of his dependence; for, on the one hand, the reproduction of certain elements from Obadiah's prophecy does not in the least invalidate his originality, inasmuch as the reproduction is itself original; and, on the other hand, not one of the prophets with whom we are acquainted (not even Isaiah) is so original as that the prophecies of his predecessors are not echoed by him, just as Obadiah, even if he were original in relation to Joel, had the prophecies of Balaam as his original, and imitates them in several passages (compare Num. xxiv. 21, 18, 19 with Ob. 4, 18, 19)." But the fact that Joel rests upon Obadiah is proved in the most decisive manner by the expression in Joel ii. 32, "as the Lord hath said," where the foregoing thought, which is common both to Joel and Obadiah, viz. "in Mount Zion . . . shall be *ph'letah*" (see Ob. 17), is described as a well-known word of the Lord. Now Joel can only have taken this from Obadiah, for it occurs nowhere else; and the idea suggested by Ewald, that it is derived from an older oracle that has been lost, would only be feasible if the later date of Obadiah, or his dependence upon Joel, could be demonstrated by conclusive arguments, which is not the case.

A correct determination of the relation in which Obadiah stood to Joel, especially if we compare the prophecies of Amos, who also alludes to Joel (compare Joel iii. 16 with Amos i. 2, and Joel iii. 18 with Amos ix. 13), leads with the greatest probability to the conclusion that Obadiah reproaches the Edomites with the hostility which they displayed when Judah and Jerusalem were plundered by the Philistines and Arabians in the time of Jehoram. In the reign of Jehoram the Edomites threw off the Judæan supremacy (compare 2 Kings viii. 20-22, and 2 Chron. xxi. 8-10); and in connection with this rebellion, they appear to have planned a great massacre upon

בְּהָרֵי צִיּוֹן וּבִירוּשָׁלַם תְּהִיָּה פְּלִיטָה in Ob. 17 with תְּהִיָּה פְּלִיטָה in Joel ii. 32, and lastly, בְּהָרֵי צִיּוֹן וּבִירוּשָׁלַם תְּהִיָּה פְּלִיטָה in Ob. 17; and lastly, בְּהָרֵי צִיּוֹן וּבִירוּשָׁלַם תְּהִיָּה פְּלִיטָה in Ob. 18 and Joel iii. 8.

the Judæans, who were in their land at the time (compare Joel iii. 19 with Amos i. 11). Libnah also fell away from Judah at the same time (2 Kings viii. 22; 2 Chron. xxi. 10), and Philistines and Arabians penetrated victoriously into Judah. This expedition of the Philistines and (Petræan) Arabians against Jerusalem was not merely "a passing raid on the part of certain of the neighbouring nations who had been made tributary by Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. xvii. 11), and had rebelled in the time of Jehoram," as Caspari says; but these hordes continued their ravages in the most cruel manner in Judah and Jerusalem. According to 2 Chron. xxi. 17, they burst into the land, forced their way into Jerusalem, plundered the royal palace, and carried away the children and wives of the king, so that only the youngest son, Jehoahaz or Ahaziah, was left behind. We also learn from Joel iii. 5 that they took away gold, silver, and jewels from the temple; and from Joel iii. 3, 6, that they carried on the vilest trade with the men and women of Judah, and sold the captives to the Greeks, and that, as we see from Amos i. 6, 9, through the medium of the Phœnicians and Edomites. This agrees perfectly with Ob. 10-14. For, according to this passage also, the Edomites themselves were not the enemies who conquered Jerusalem and plundered its treasures, but simply accomplices, who rejoiced in the doings of the enemy (vers. 11 sqq.), held carousals with them upon the holy mountain Zion (ver. 16), and sought, partly by rapine and partly by slaying or capturing the fugitive Judæans (ver. 14), to get as much gain as possible out of Judah's misfortune. We must therefore regard this event, as Hofmann and Delitzsch have done, as the occasion of Obadiah's prophecy, and that all the more, because the historical allusions which it contains can thereby be satisfactorily explained; whereas the other attempts at solving the difficulties, when we look at the thing more closely, prove to be either altogether untenable, or such as will not apply throughout.

Thus, for example, Ewald and Graf (on Jer. xlix. 7 sqq.) have endeavoured to reconcile the fact that Jeremiah had read the first part of Obadiah as early as the fourth year of Jehoiakim, and had made use of it in his prophecy, with the opinion that vers. 10-16 (Ob.) refer to the Chaldean conquest and destruction of Jerusalem, by the hypothesis that the first part



of Obadiah, as we possess it, was founded upon an earlier prophecy, which was adopted by the later editor of our book, and incorporated in his writings, and which had also been made use of by Jeremiah. In support of this hypothesis, the circumstance has been adduced, that Jeremiah's references to Obadiah only extend to ver. 9, that the introductory words in Obadiah, "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah concerning Edom," do not stand in a close connection with what follows immediately after and thus appear to have been added at a later period, and that the rare word *tiphlatst'khâ* (Jer. xlix. 16), which is not met with anywhere else in Jeremiah, is wanting in Obadiah. But the first phenomenon may be explained very simply, from the fact that the remaining portion of Obadiah (vers. 10-21) furnished nothing which Jeremiah could make use of for his object, and that we have an analogy in the relation between Jer. xlviii. and Isaiah's prophecy concerning Moab (Isa. xv. xvi.), where in just the same manner certain portions, viz. Isa. xvi. 1-5, have not been made use of at all. Again, the want of any closer logical connection between the introduction, "Thus hath the Lord said with regard to Edom," and what follows, "We have heard a rumour from Jehovah," arises from the circumstance that these introductory words do not apply exclusively to what follows immediately after, but belong to the whole of Obadiah's prophecy (see at ver. 1). Moreover, these words could not have been wanting even in the supposed earlier or original prophecy, inasmuch as what follows would be unintelligible without them, since the name *Edom*, to which the suffixes and addresses in vers. 1c-5 apply, would be altogether wanting. And lastly, the word *tiphlatst'khâ*, which is otherwise strange to Jeremiah, proves nothing in favour of an earlier source, which both Obadiah and Jeremiah employed; nor can we see any sufficient reason for its omission when the earlier oracle was adopted. The other arguments adduced in support of this hypothesis are entirely without significance, if not absolutely erroneous. The fact that from ver. 10 onwards, where Jeremiah ceases to make use of our prophecy, the connection between Obadiah and Joel commences, of which there is not the slightest trace in vers. 1-9, has its natural foundation in the contents of the two parts of Obadiah. The announcement of the judgment upon the Edomites in Ob. 1-9 could not be

made use of by Joel, because, with the exception of the casual allusion in ch. iii. 19, he does not treat of the judgment upon Edom at all. The contents of Ob. 1-9 also show the reason why no allusion whatever is made in these verses to Israel and Jerusalem. The judgment predicted here was not to be executed by either Israel or Judah, but by the nations. Graf's assertion, that ver. 7 contains an allusion to totally different circumstances from those referred to in vers. 10 sqq., as the verses mentioned relate to altogether disproportionate things, is decidedly incorrect. So also is Ewald's opinion, that half our present Obadiah, viz. vers. 1-10, and vers. 17<sup>a</sup> and 18, "clearly points to an earlier prophet in contents, language, and colour." Caspari has already replied to this as follows: "We confess, on the contrary, that we can discover no difference in colour and language between vers. 1-9 and 10-21. The latter has its ἀπαξ λεγόμενα and its rare words just like the former (compare חָנִי סֶלַע ver. 3, נִבְעֵי ver. 6, מִצְפָּנִי ver. 6, מְזֹר ver. 7, קָטַל ver. 9, in the first paragraph; and נָכְרוּ ver. 12, הִשְׁלַחְנָה ver. 13, פָּרַק ver. 14, לָעֵי ver. 16, in the second); and precisely the same liveliness and boldness which distinguished the first part of the prophecy, prevail in the second also. Not a single later word, nor a single form of more recent date, is met with to indicate the later origin of the second part." Moreover, it is impossible to discover any well-established analogy in the prophetical writings of the Old Testament to support this hypothesis.

The attempt made by Caspari, Hengstenberg, and others, to reconcile the opinion, that Obadiah alludes in vers. 11 sqq. to the Chaldean destruction of Jerusalem, with the fact that Jeremiah has made use of our book of Obadiah in his prophecy against Edom, which was uttered in the reign of Jehoiakim, by the assumption that Obadiah is not describing something that has already happened, but giving a prophetic picture of the future, is wrecked on the wording of the verses in question. When Obadiah threatens Edom with shame and destruction on account of its wickedness towards its brother Jacob (ver. 10), and then describes this wickedness in preterites—"On the day of thy standing opposite when strangers had come into his gates and cast the lot upon Jerusalem" (ver. 11); and, "As ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so will all the heathen drink," etc. (ver. 16)—no one would understand these preterites as used

prophetically, *i.e.* as referring to what was not to take place till a far distant future, except on the most conclusive grounds. Such grounds, however, some imagine that they can find in vers. 12-14, where the prophet warns the Edomites not to rejoice over their brother nation's day of calamity, or take part in the destruction of Judah. Hengstenberg and Caspari follow Theodoret, Michaelis, and others, in the opinion that Obadiah is predicting the destruction of Jerusalem, and that ver. 11 can only be interpreted prophetically, and cannot be taken as referring to an ideal past. For, as Caspari adds (p. 29), "I might very well be able to warn a person against an act, even though he were just about to perform it, and I were perfectly certain that he would perform it notwithstanding, and my warning would be fruitless, and though I merely warned him, that he might not perform it without warning; but to warn a person against an act which he has already performed would be a most marvellous thing, even though the warning were only given in the spirit and with the deed standing out as a present thing." No doubt it is perfectly true that "such a warning after the deed was done would be quite out of place," if it had reference merely to one isolated act, a repetition of which was not to be expected. But if the act already performed was but one single outbreak of a prevailing disposition, and might be repeated on every fresh occasion, and possibly had already shown itself more than once, a warning against such an act could neither be regarded as out of place, nor as particularly striking, even after the thing had been done. The warnings in vers. 12-14, therefore, do not compel us to interpret the preterites in vers. 11 and 16 prophetically, as relating to some future deed. Moreover, "the repeated warnings against so wicked a deed were simply the drapery in which the prophet clothed the prediction of the certain coming of the day of Jehovah, which would put an end to the manifestation of such a disposition on the part of Edom" (Delitzsch). There is still less ground for the further remark of Caspari, that the allusions to Joel in Obadiah's description of the day of calamity (not "of the destruction") of Jerusalem, unquestionably preclude the supposition that he was an eye-witness of that event, and require the hypothesis that he wrote either before or a long time afterwards. For these allusions are not of such a nature

that Obadiah simply repeats and still further develops what Joel had already prophesied before him, but, on the contrary, of such a nature that Joel had Obadiah before his mind, and has expanded certain features of his prophecy still further in ch. iii. 3-6. The description of the hostilities of the Edomites towards Israel, Obadiah could not possibly take from either Joel, or Amos ix. 12, or the sayings of Balaam in Num. xxiv. 18, 19, as Caspari supposes; because neither of these prophets has depicted them any more fully, but can only have drawn it from his own experience, and from what he himself had seen, so that his prophecy is thereby proved to be the original, as compared with that of Joel and Amos.

All this leads to the conclusion, that we must regard Obadiah as older than Joel, and fix upon the reign of Joram as the date of his ministry, but without thereby giving him "an isolated position;" for, according to the most correct chronological arrangement of their respective dates, Joel prophesied at the most twenty years after him, and Hosea and Amos commenced their labours only about seventy-five years later. The calamitous event which burst upon Judah and Jerusalem, and gave occasion for Obadiah's prophecy, took place in the latter part of Joram's eight years' reign. Consequently Obadiah cannot have uttered his prophecy, and committed it to writing, very long before Jehoram's death. At the same time, it cannot have been at a later period; because, on the one hand, it produces the unquestionable impression, that the hostilities practised by the Edomites were still kept in the most lively remembrance; and on the other hand, it contains no hint of that idolatrous worship to which the ruthless Athaliah endeavoured to give the pre-eminence in Judah, after the one year's reign of Ahaziah, who succeeded Joram. For the commentaries on Obadiah, see my *Lehrbuch der Einleitung*, § 88.

## EXPOSITION.

THE JUDGMENT UPON EDMOM, AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF  
THE KINGDOM OF GOD UPON ZION.

The prophecy of Obadiah, which is headed the *cházôn*, *visio* (see at Isa. i. 1), is divisible into three sections: vers. 1-9, 10-16, and 17-21. In the first section the prophet proclaims—

EDOM'S RUIN, setting forth, in the first place, the purpose of God to make Edom small through the medium of hostile nations, and to hurl it down from the impregnable heights of its rocky castles (vers. 1-4); and then depicting, in lively colours, how it will be plundered by enemies, forsaken and deceived by allies and friends, and perish in helplessness and impotence (vers. 5-9). Ver. 1 contains, in addition to the brief heading, the introduction to the prophecy, which gives in a brief form the substance of the first section: "*Thus hath the Lord Jehovah spoken of Edom, A report have we heard from Jehovah, and a messenger is sent among the nations: Up, and let us arise against it in battle.*" The first clause, *בְּה' אָמַר . . . לְאֲדוֹמ*, does not harmonize with what follows, inasmuch as we should expect it to be followed with a declaration made by Jehovah Himself, instead of which there follow simply tidings heard from Jehovah. The difficulty cannot be removed by assuming that these introductory words are spurious, or were added by a later prophet (Eichhorn, Ewald, and others); for the interpolator could not fail to observe the incongruity of these words just as well as Obadiah. Moreover, *לְאֲדוֹמ* could not be omitted from the opening, because it is required not only by the suffix in *עָלֶיהָ* (against her), but also by the direct addresses in vers. 2 sqq. Nor is the assumption that the prophet suddenly altered the construction any more satisfactory, or that the declaration of Jehovah announced in *בְּה' אָמַר וְגו'* ("thus saith the Lord") commences in ver. 2, and that the words from *שְׁמִיעָה* to the end of the verse form an explanatory parenthesis to *בְּה' אָמַר וְגו'*. For such an alteration of the construction at the very be-

ginning of the address is hardly conceivable; and the parenthetical explanation of the last three clauses of ver. 1 is at variance with their contents, which do not form by any means a subordinate thought, but rather the main thought of the following address. No other course remains, therefore, than to take these introductory words by themselves, as Michaelis, Maurer, and Caspari have done, in which case כה אמר does not announce the actual words of Jehovah in the stricter sense, but is simply meant to affirm that the prophet uttered what follows *jussu Jehovah*, or *divinitus monitus*, so that כה אמר is really equivalent to וְהָיָה הַדְּבָרִי אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר in Isa. xvi. 13, as Theodoret has explained it. לְאֶדוֹם, not "to Edom," but with reference to, or of, Edom. On the occurrence of *Y'hōvāh* after 'Adōnāi, see the comm. on Gen. ii. 4. What Obadiah saw as a word of the Lord was the tidings heard from the Lord, and the divine message sent to the nations to rise up for war against Edom. The plural שָׁמַעְנוּ (*we* have heard) is communicative. The prophet includes himself in the nation (Israel), which has heard the tidings in him and through him. This implies that the tidings were of the greatest interest to Israel, and would afford it consolation. Jeremiah (xlix. 14) has removed the pregnant character of the expression, by introducing the singular שָׁמַעְתִּי (I have heard). The next clause, "and an ambassador," etc., might be taken, as it has been by Luther, as a statement of the import of the news, namely, that a messenger had been sent; inasmuch as in Hebrew a sentence is frequently co-ordinated with the preceding one by *Vav cop.*, when it ought really to be subordinated to it so far as the sense is concerned, from a simple preference for the parallelism of the clauses. But the address gains in force, if we take the clause as a co-ordinate one, just as it reads, viz. as a declaration of the steps already taken by the Lord for carrying out the resolution which had been heard of by report. In this case the substance of the report is not given till the last clause of the verse; the summons of the ambassador sent among the nations, "to rise up for war against Edom," indicating at the same time the substance of the report which Israel has heard. The perfect *shullāch* with *qāmet*s in the pause, which is changed by Jeremiah into the less appropriate passive participle *kal*, corresponds to שָׁמַעְנִי, and expresses in prophetic form the certainty of the accomplishment of the

purpose of God. The sending of the messenger (*tsir* as in Isa. xviii. 2) among the nations (ב as in Judg. vi. 35) is an assurance that the nations will rise up at the instigation of Jehovah to war against Edom (compare Isa. xiii. 17; Jer. li. 1, 11). The plural *nâqûmâh* (let us rise up), in the words of the messenger, may be explained on the simple ground that the messenger speaks in the name of the sender. The sender is Jehovah, who will also rise up along with the nations for war against Edom, placing Himself at their head as leader and commander (compare Joel ii. 11; Isa. xiii. 4, 5). עֲלֵיָהּ, against Edom, construed as a land or kingdom, *gener. fœm.* The fact that it is the nations generally that are here summoned to make war upon Edom, and not any one nation in particular, points at once to the fact that Edom is regarded as a type of the power of the world, and its hostility to God, the destruction of which is here foretold.

Vers. 2-4. The Lord threatens Edom with war, because He has determined to reduce and humble the nation, which now, with its proud confidence in its lofty rocky towers, regards itself as invincible. Ver. 2. "*Behold, I have made thee small among the nations; thou art greatly despised.*" Ver. 3. "*The pride of thy heart hath deceived thee; thou that dwellest in rocky castles, upon its lofty seat; that saith in its heart, Who will cast me down to the ground?*" Ver. 4. "*If thou buildest high like the eagle, and if thy nest were placed among stars, thence will I cast thee down, is the saying of Jehovah.*" Ver. 2 is correctly attached in Jeremiah (ver. 15) by בִּי, inasmuch as it contains the reason for the attack upon Edom. By *hinnēh* (behold), which points to the fact itself, the humiliation of Edom is vividly presented to the mind. The perfect *nâthattî* "describes the resolution of Jehovah as one whose fulfilment is as certain as if it had already occurred" (Caspari). What Jehovah says really takes place. בָּנִי refers to the number of the people. The participle בָּנוֹי is perfectly appropriate, as expressing the ideal present, i.e. the present which follows the בָּנִי בְּתִיָּהּ. When the Lord has made Edom small, it will be very much despised. It is only through an incorrect interpretation of the historical present that Hitzig could possibly be led to regard the participle as unsuitable, and to give the preference to Jeremiah's בָּנוֹי בְּתִיָּהּ. Ver. 3 contains a consequence which follows from ver. 2. Edom

will be unable to avert this fate: its lofty rocky castles will not preserve it from the overthrow which has been decreed by the Lord, and which He will carry out through the medium of the nations. Edom has therefore been deceived by its proud reliance upon these rocky towers. **נִשְׁכְּנִי**, with the connecting sound ' attached to the construct state (see at Gen. xxxi. 39), is a vocative. **הַנִּי סִלְעַ** are rocky towers, though the primary meaning of **הַנִּי** is open to dispute. The word is derived from the root **נָחַ**, which is not used in Hebrew (like **נָחַ** from **נָחַ**), and is found not only here and in the parallel passage of Jeremiah, but also in the Song of Sol. ii. 14, where it occurs in parallelism with **מִתְּרַ**, which points to the meaning *refugium*, i.e. asylum. This meaning has also been confirmed by A. Schultens (*Animadv. ad Jes.* xix. 17) and by Michaelis (*Thes. s.v. Jes.*), from

the Arabic **حَجَبًا**, *confugit*, and **مَحَجَبًا**, *refugium*.<sup>1</sup> In the expression **מָרוֹם נִשְׁכְּנִי** the **נ** is to be considered as still retaining its force from **הַנִּי** onwards (cf. Isa. xxviii. 7; Job xv. 3, etc.). The emphasis rests upon *high*; and hence the abstract noun *mārôm*, height, instead of the adjective. The Edomites inhabited the mountains of *Seir*, which have not yet been carefully explored in detail. They are on the eastern side of the Ghor (or Arabah), stretching from the deep rocky valley of the Ahsy, which opens into the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, and extending as far as *Æla* on the Red Sea, and consist of mighty rocks of granite and porphyry, covered with fresh vegetation, which terminate in the west, towards the deeply intersected sand-sea of the Ghor and Arabah, in steep and lofty walls of sandstone. The mountains are hardly accessible, therefore, on the western side; whereas on the east they

<sup>1</sup> The renderings adopted on the authority of the ancient versions, such as clefts of the rock, *scissuræ*, jagged rocks, fissures (*inai*, LXX.), caves, which are derived either from the supposed connection between **נָחַ** and

**חָקַ**, and the Arabic **خَجَجَ**, *fidit, laceravit*, or from the Arabic **وَجَجَ**, *antrum* (with the letters transposed), have far less to sustain them. For the meanings assigned to these Arabic words are not the primary meanings, but derivative ones. The former signifies literally *propulit*, the latter *confugit*, iv. *effecit ut ad rem confugeret*; and **وَجَجَ** means *refugium, asylum*.



are gradually lost in the broad sandy desert of Arabia, without any perceptible fall (see Burckhardt in v. Raumer's *Pal.* pp. 83-4, 86; and Robinson's *Palestine*, ii. p. 551 sqq.). They also abound in clefts, with both natural and artificial caves; and hence its earliest inhabitants were Horites, *i.e.* dwellers in caves; and even the Edomites dwelt in caves, at least to some extent.<sup>1</sup> The capital, *Sela* (*Petra*), in the Wady Musa, of whose glory at one time there are proofs still to be found in innumerable remains of tombs, temples, and other buildings, was shut in both upon the east and west by rocky walls, which present an endless variety of bright lively colours, from the deepest crimson to the softest pale red, and sometimes passing into orange and yellow; whilst on the north and south it was so encircled by hills and heights, that it could only be reached by climbing through very difficult mountain passes and defiles (see Burckhardt, *Syr.* p. 703; Robinson, *Pal.* ii. p. 573; and Ritter, *Erdk.* xiv. p. 1103); and Pliny calls it *oppidum circumdatum montibus inaccessis*. Compare Strabo, xvi. 779; and for the different roads to Petra, Ritter, p. 997 sqq. Ver. 4 shows the worthlessness of this reliance of the Edomites. The object to תַּנְבִּיחַ, viz. תַּנְבִּיחַ, does not follow till the second clause: If thou makest thy nest high like the eagle, which builds its nest upon the loftiest jagged rocks (Job xxxix. 27, 28). This thought is hyperbolically intensified in the second clause: if thy nest had been placed among stars. מִשְׁמַיִם is not an infinitive, but a passive participle, as in the primary passage, Num. xxiv. 21, which Obadiah had before his mind, and in 1 Sam. ix. 24, 2 Sam. xiii. 32; but תַּנְבִּיחַ is nevertheless to be taken as an accusative of the object, after the analogy of the construction of passives *c. accus. obj.* (see Ges. § 143, *l. a.*)

Vers. 5-7. The prophet sees this overthrow of Edom from its lofty height as something that has already happened, and he now depicts the utter devastation of Edom through the medium of the enemies whom Jehovah has summoned against it. Ver. 5. "If thieves had come to thee, if robbers by night,

<sup>1</sup> Jerome observes on ver. 6: "And indeed . . . throughout the whole of the southern region of the Idumæans, from Eleutheropolis to Petra and Hala (for this is a possession of Esau), there are small dwellings in caves; and on account of the great heat of the sun, since it is a southern province, subterranean huts are used."

alas, how art thou destroyed! would they not steal their sufficiency? If vine-dressers had come to thee, would they not leave gleanings? Ver. 6. How have the things of Esau been explored, his hidden treasures desired! Ver. 7. Even to the border have all the men of thy covenant sent thee: the men of thy peace have deceived thee, overpowered thee. They make thy bread a wound under thee. There is no understanding in him." In order to exhibit the more vividly the complete clearing out of Edom, Obadiah supposes two cases of plundering in which there is still something left (ver. 5), and then shows that the enemies in Edom will act much worse than this. אֲנִי with the perfect supposes a case to have already occurred, when, although it does not as yet exist in reality, it does so in imagination. נִגְבִּים are common thieves, and שֹׁדְדֵי לַיְלָה robbers by night, who carry off another's property by force. With this second expression, the verb נָאָז לְךָ must be repeated. "To thee," i.e. to do thee harm; it is actually equivalent to "upon thee." The following words אֵיךְ נִרְמִיתָה cannot form the apodosis to the two previous clauses, because *nidmēthāh* is too strong a term for the injury inflicted by thieves or robbers, but chiefly because the following expression הֲלֹא יִגְבּוּ וְנִי is irreconcilable with such an explanation, the thought that thieves steal גָּזְזוּ being quite opposed to *nidmāh*, or being destroyed. The clause "how art thou destroyed" must rather be taken as pointing far beyond the contents of vers. 5c and 6. It is more fully explained in ver. 9, and is thereby proved to be a thought thrown in parenthetically, with which the prophet anticipates the principal fact in his lively description, in the form of an exclamation of amazement. The apodosis to 'im gannābhīm (if robbers, etc.) follows in the words "do they not steal" (= they surely steal) *dayyām*, i.e. their sufficiency (see Delitzsch on Isa. xl. 16); that is to say, as much as they need, or can use, or find lying open before them. The picture of the grape-gatherers says the same thing. They also do not take away all, even to the very last, but leave some gleanings behind, not only if they fear God, according to Lev. xix. 10, Deut. xxiv. 21, as Hitzig supposes, but even if they do not trouble themselves about God's commandments at all, because many a bunch escapes their notice which is only discovered on careful gleaning. Edom, on the contrary, is completely cleared out. In ver. 6 the address to Edom passes

over into words concerning him. וְעַל is construed as a collective with the plural. וְעַל is a question of amazement. *Cháp̄has*, to search through, to explore (cf. Zeph. i. 12, 13). *Bá'áh* (*nibh'û*), to beg, to ask; here in the *niph'al* to be desired. *Matspōn*, מַצְפּוֹן *ἀπ. λεγ.* from *tsûphan*, does not mean a secret place, but a hidden thing or treasure (τὰ κεκρυμμένα αὐτοῦ, LXX.). Obadiah mentions the plundering first, because Petra, the capital of Edom, was a great emporium of the Syrio-Arabian trade, where many valuables were stored (*vid.* Diod. Sic. xix. 95), and because with the loss of these riches the prosperity and power of Edom were destroyed.<sup>1</sup>—Ver. 7. In the midst of this calamity Edom will be forsaken and betrayed by its allies, and will also be unable to procure any deliverance for itself by its own understanding. The allies send Edom even to the border. The meaning of this is not that they will not receive the Edomitish fugitives, but drive them back to the frontier, so that they fall into the hands of the enemy (Hitzig and others); for the suffix וְ cannot refer to the small number of fugitives from Edom who have escaped the massacre, but applies to Edom as a nation. The latter seeks for help and support from their allies,—namely, through the medium of ambassadors whom it sends to them. But the ambassadors, and in their persons the Edomites themselves, are sent back to the frontier by all the allies, because they will not entangle themselves in the fate of Edom. Sending to the frontier, however, is not to be understood as signifying that the allies “send their troops with them as far as the frontier, and then order them to turn back,” as Michaelis supposes; for “if the allies were unwilling to help, they would hardly call out the army to march as far as the frontier” (Hitzig). Nor is this implied either in וְשִׁלְחָהֶם or וְהִשְׁלַחָהֶם; for *shilleäch* means to send away, to dismiss, and both here and in Gen. xii. 20 to send across the frontier. This was a deception of the expectation of the Edomites, although the words “have deceived thee” belong, strictly speaking, to what follows, and not to the conduct of the allies. אֲנִי שֶׁלַחְתִּי,

<sup>1</sup> Jeremiah (ch. xlix. 9) has greatly altered the words of Obadiah, dropping the comparison of the enemy to thieves and grape-gatherers, and representing the enemy as being themselves grape-gatherers who leave no gleanings, and thieves who waste till they have enough; and thereby considerably weakening the poetical picture.

an expression taken from Ps. xli. 10, both here and in Jer. xxxviii. 22 (cf. xx. 10), the men or people with whom thou didst live in peace, are probably neighbouring Arabian tribes, who had made commercial treaties with the Edomites. They deceived, or rather overpowered, Edom. לְלִי is the practical explanation and more precise definition of הַשְׁמִי. But the answer to the question whether the overpowering was carried out by cunning and deception (Jer. xx. 10, xxxviii. 22), or by open violence (Gen. xxxii. 26; Ps. cxxix. 2), depends upon the explanation given to the next sentence, about which there are great diversities of opinion, partly on account of the different explanations given of הַמִּלֵּךְ, and partly on account of the different renderings given to מִזֹּר. The latter occurs in Hos. v. 13 and Jer. xxx. 13 in the sense of a festering wound or abscess, and the rabbinical commentators and lexicographers have retained this meaning in the passage before us. On the other hand, the older translators have here *ἐνέδρα* (LXX.),

נִסְבָּה, offence, *σκάνδαλον* (Chald.), ܢܝܨܒܐ, *insidiæ* (Syr.), Aq.

and Symm. *σύνδεσμος* and *ἐπίδεσις*, Vulg. *insidiæ*; and hence the modern rendering, they lay a snare, or place a trap under thee. But this rendering cannot be vindicated etymologically, since *zûr* (= *zârar*) does not mean to bind, but to press together or squeeze out. Nor can the form *mâzôr* be taken as a contraction of *m'zôrâh*, as Hitzig supposes, since this is derived from *zârâh*, to strew or scatter. And no weight is to be attached to the opinion of Aquila with his literal translation, for the simple reason that his rendering of Hos. v. 13 is decidedly false. Ewald and Hitzig prefer the rendering "net;" but this, again, cannot be sustained either from the expression *m'zôrâh lâresheth* in Prov. i. 17 (Hitzig), or from the Syriac *m'zar*, *extendit* (Ges. *Addid. ad thes.* p. 96). The only meaning that can be sustained is abscess or wound. We must therefore adhere to the rendering, "they make thy bread a wound under thee." For the proposal to take *lachm'khâ* (thy bread) as a second genitive dependent upon *'anshê* (the men), is not only opposed to the accents and the parallelism of the members, according to which *'anshê sh'ômekkhâ* (the men of thy peace) must conclude the second clause, just as *'anshê b'rûtekhâ* (the men of thy covenant) closes the first; but it is altogether

unexampled, and the expression *'anshē lachm'khâ* is itself unheard of. For this reason we must not even supply *'anshē* to *lachm'khâ* from the previous sentence, or make "the men of thy bread" the subject, notwithstanding the fact that the LXX., the Chald., the Syr., and Jerome have adopted this as the meaning. Still less can *lachm'khâ* stand in the place of אֲכָלִי לֶחְמִי (they that eat thy bread), as some suppose. *Lachm'khâ* can only be the first object to *yâsimû*, and consequently the subject of the previous clause still continues in force: they who befriended thee make thy bread, *i.e.* the bread which they ate from thee or with thee, not "the bread which thou seekest from them" (Hitzig), into a wound under thee, *i.e.* an occasion for destroying thee. We have not to think of common meals of hospitality here, as Rashi, Rosenmüller, and others do; but the words are to be taken figuratively, after the analogy of Ps. xli. 10, which floated before the prophet's mind, "He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up the heel against me," as denoting conspiracies on the part of those who were allied to Edom, and drew their own sustenance from it, the rich trading nation, to destroy that very nation which was now oppressed by its foes. The only difficulty is in the word תַּחְתִּיךָ, under thee, inasmuch as the meaning "without thy knowledge" (*clam te*), which Vatablus and Drusius adopt, cannot be sustained, and least of all from 2 Sam. iii. 12. We must connect תַּחְתִּיךָ closely with מְזֹר, in this sense, that the wound is inflicted upon the lower part of the body, to express its dangerous nature, inasmuch as wounds upon which one sits or lies are hard to heal. Consequently יִכְלִי לִי (they prevail against thee) is to be understood as denoting conquest, not by an unexpected attack or open violence, but by cunning and deceit, or by secret treachery. The last clause, אֲזַן תִּבְינָה וְנִי, does not give the reason why the thing described was to happen to the Edomites (Chald., Theod.); nor is it to be connected with *mâzôr* as a relative clause (Hitzig), or as explanatory of תַּחְתִּיךָ, "to thee, without thy perceiving it, or before thou perceivest it" (Luther and L. de Dieu). The very change from the second person to the third (בֵּן) is a proof that it introduces an independent statement,—namely, that in consequence of the calamity which thus bursts upon the Edomites, they lose their wonted discernment, and neither know what to do nor how to help them-

selves (Maurer and Caspari). This thought is expanded still further in vers. 8, 9.

Ver. 8. "*Does it not come to pass in that day, is the saying of Jehovah, that I destroy the wise men out of Edom, and discernment from the mountains of Esau?*" Ver. 9. *And thy heroes despair, O Teman, that every one may be cut off by murder from the mountains of Esau.*" In order to give up the Edomites to destruction at that time, the Lord will take away discernment from their wise men, so that even they will not be able to help them. The destruction of the wise men is not to be understood as signifying that the wise men will all be slain, or slain before any others, but simply that they will be destroyed as wise men by the withdrawal or destruction of their wisdom. This meaning is sustained, not only by the fact that in the second clause *ʾbhūnāh* only is mentioned as that which is to be destroyed, but also by the parallel passages, Jer. xlix. 7, Isa. xix. 11, xxix. 14. Jeremiah mentions here the wisdom of the Temanites in particular. That they were celebrated for their wisdom, is evident not only from this passage, but also from the fact that Eliphaz, the chief opponent of Job in argument, was a Temanite (Job ii. 1, etc.). With this withdrawal of wisdom and discernment, even the brave warriors lose their courage. The heroes are dismayed (*chattū*), or fall into despair. *Tēman*, which the Chaldee has rendered incorrectly as an appellative, viz. inhabitant of the south (*dārōmā*), is a proper name of the southern district of Idumæa (see at Amos i. 12), so called from Teman, a son of Eliphaz and grandson of Esau (Gen. xxxvi. 11, 15). *Gibbōrehkā* (thy heroes), with the masculine suffix, the people inhabiting the district being addressed under the name of the district itself. God inflicts this upon Edom with the intention (*ʾmāʾan*, to this end) that all the Edomites should be cut off. *Miqqâtel*, from the murdering, by murder (compare Gen. ix. 11, where *min* occurs after *yikkârēth* in this sense); not "without conflict," as Ewald renders it, for *qetel* signifies slaying, and not conflict. The thought of connecting *miqqâtel* with what follows cannot for a moment be entertained (*vid.* LXX., Syr., Vulg.). It is opposed not only by the authority of the Masoretic punctuation, but still more decisively by the fact, that the stronger and more special word (*qetel*) cannot precede the weaker and more gene-

ral one (*châmás*), and that the murder of certain fugitives is placed first in the list of crimes committed by Edom upon the Israelites (vers. 10–14).

Vers. 10–16. **THE CAUSE OF THE RUIN OF THE EDMITES** is their wickedness towards the brother nation Jacob (vers. 10 and 11), which is still further exhibited in vers. 12–14 in the form of a warning, accompanied by an announcement of righteous retribution in the day of the Lord upon all nations (vers. 15, 16). Ver. 10. "*For the wickedness towards thy brother Jacob shame will cover thee, and thou wilt be cut off for ever.*" Ver. 11. "*In the day that thou stoodest opposite, in the day when enemies carried away his goods, and strangers came into his gates, and cast the lot upon Jerusalem, then even thou (wast) like one of them.*" *Châmas 'áchikhâ*, wickedness, violent wrong towards (upon) thy brother (*genit. obj.* as in Joel iii. 19, Gen. xvi. 5, etc.). Drusus has already pointed out the peculiar emphasis on these words. Wrong, or violence, is all the more reprehensible, when it is committed against a brother. The fraternal relation in which Edom stood towards Judah is still more sharply defined by the name *Jacob*, since Esau and Jacob were twin brothers. The consciousness that the Israelites were their brethren, ought to have impelled the Edomites to render helpful support to the oppressed Judæans. Instead of this, they not only revelled with scornful and malignant pleasure in the misfortune of the brother nation, but endeavoured to increase it still further by rendering active support to the enemy. This hostile behaviour of Edom arose from envy at the election of Israel, like the hatred of Esau towards Jacob (Gen. xxvii. 41), which was transmitted to his descendants, and came out openly in the time of Moses, in the unbrotherly refusal to allow the Israelites to pass in a peaceable manner through their land (Num. xx.). On the other hand, the Israelites are always commanded in the law to preserve a friendly and brotherly attitude towards Edom (Deut. ii. 4, 5); and in Deut. xxiii. 7 it is enjoined upon them not to abhor the Edomite, because he is their brother. תִּכְסֶּף בְּרִשָּׁה (as in Mic. vii. 10), shame will cover thee, *i.e.* come upon thee in full measure,—namely, the shame of everlasting destruction, as the following explanatory clause clearly shows. וַיִּכְרַת with *Vav consec.*, but

with the tone upon the *penultima*, contrary to the rule (cf. Ges. § 49, 3; Ewald, § 234, *b* and *c*). In the more precise account of Edom's sins given in ver. 11, the last clause does not answer exactly to the first. After the words "in the day that thou stoodest opposite," we should expect the apodosis "thou didst this or that." But Obadiah is led away from the sentence which he has already begun, by the enumeration of hostilities displayed towards Judah by its enemies, so that he observes with regard to Edom's behaviour: Then even thou wast as one of them, that is to say, thou didst act just like the enemy. עָמַד מִנְּקִדָּה, to stand opposite (compare Ps. xxxviii. 12), used here to denote a hostile intention, as in 2 Sam. xviii. 13. They showed this at first by looking on with pleasure at the misfortunes of the Judæans (ver. 12), still more by stretching out their hand after their possessions (ver. 13), but most of all by taking part in the conflict with Judah (ver. 14). In the clauses which follow, the day when Edom acted thus is described as a day on which Judah had fallen into the power of hostile nations, who carried off its possessions, and disposed of Jerusalem as their booty. *Zārīm* and *nokhrīm* are synonymous epithets applied to heathen foes. שָׁבָה generally denotes the carrying away of captives; but it is sometimes applied to booty in cattle and goods, or treasures (1 Chron. v. 21; 2 Chron. xiv. 14, xxi. 17). הָיָל is not used here either for the army, or for the strength, i.e. the kernel of the nation, but, as הָיָל in ver. 13 clearly shows, for its possessions, as in Isa. viii. 4, x. 14, Ezek. xxvi. 12, etc. שַׁעְרֵי, his (Judah's) gates, used rhetorically for his cities. Lastly, Jerusalem is also mentioned as the capital, upon which the enemies cast lots. The three clauses form a climax: first, the carrying away of Judah's possessions, that is to say, probably those of the open country; then the forcing of a way into the cities; and lastly, arbitrary proceedings both in and with the capital. יָדוּ נֹהֵל (perf. *kal* of יָדָה = יָדָה, not *piel* for יָדָה, because the *Yod præf.* of the imperfect *piel* is never dropped in verbs פִּעִי), to cast the lot upon booty (things) and prisoners, to divide them among them (compare Joel iii. 3 and Nah. iii. 10). Caspari, Hitzig, and others understand it here as in Joel iii. 3, as denoting the distribution of the captive inhabitants of Jerusalem, and found upon this one of their leading arguments, that the description given here



refers to the destruction of Jerusalem, which Obadiah either foresaw in the Spirit, or depicts as something already experienced. But this by no means follows from the fact that in Joel we have עַם instead of יְרֵשָׁלַם, since it is generally acknowledged that, when the prophets made use of their predecessors, they frequently modified their expressions, or gave them a different turn. But if we look at our passage simply as it stands, there is not the slightest indication that Jerusalem is mentioned in the place of the people. אֲשֶׁר יָבוֹא חֵילוֹ does not express the carrying away of the inhabitants, there is not a single syllable which refers to the carrying away captive of either the whole nation or the whole of the population of Jerusalem. On the contrary, in ver. 13 we read of the perishing of the children of Judah, and in ver. 14 of fugitives of Judah, and those that have escaped. From this it is very obvious that Obadiah had simply a conquest of Jerusalem in his eye, when part of the population was slain in battle and part taken captive, and the possessions of the city were plundered; so that the casting of the lot upon Jerusalem has reference not only to the prisoners, but also to the things taken as plunder in the city, which the conquerors divided among them. נָם אֶתָּה, even thou, the brother of Jacob, art like one of them, makest common cause with the enemy. The verb הָיִיתָ, *thou wast*, is omitted, to bring the event before the mind as something even then occurring. For this reason Obadiah also clothes the further description of the hostilities of the Edomites in the form of a warning against such conduct.

Ver. 12. "*And look not at the day of thy brother on the day of his misfortune; and rejoice not over the sons of Judah in the day of their perishing, and do not enlarge thy mouth in the day of the distress.*" Ver. 13. "*Come not into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; thou also look not at his misfortune in the day of his calamity, and stretch not out thy hand to his possession in the day of his calamity:*" Ver. 14. "*Nor stand in the cross-road, to destroy his fugitives, nor deliver up his escaped ones in the day of distress.*" This warning cannot be satisfactorily explained either "on the assumption that the prophet is here foretelling the future destruction of Judah and Jerusalem" (Caspari), or "on the supposition that he is merely depicting an event that has already past" (Hitzig). If the taking and

plundering of Jerusalem were an accomplished fact, whether in idea or in reality, as it is shown to be by the perfects וַיֵּרָא and וַיִּדְרֹשׁ in ver. 11, Obadiah could not in that case warn the Edomites against rejoicing over it, or even taking part therein. Hence Drusius, Rosenmüller, and others, take the verbs in vers. 12-14 as futures of the past: "Thou shouldest not have seen, shouldest not have rejoiced," etc. But this is opposed to the grammar. אֵל followed by the so-called *fut. apoc.* is jussive, and cannot stand for the *pluperf. conjunct.* And Maurer's suggestion is just as untenable, namely, that *yōm* in ver. 11 denotes the day of the capture of Jerusalem, and in vers. 12, 13 the period after this day; since the identity of יִם עֲמֻדָּי (the day of thy standing) in ver. 11 with יִם אֶרְצִיךָ in ver. 12 strikes the eye at once. The warning in vers. 12-14 is only intelligible on the supposition, that Obadiah has not any particular conquest and plundering of Jerusalem in his mind, whether a future one or one that has already occurred, but regards this as an event that not only has already taken place, but will take place again: that is to say, on the assumption that he rises from the particular historical event to the idea which it embodied, and that, starting from this, he sees in the existing case all subsequent cases of a similar kind. From this ideal standpoint he could warn Edom of what it had already done, and designate the disastrous day which had come upon Judah and Jerusalem by different expressions as a day of the greatest calamity; for what Edom had done, and what had befallen Judah, were types of the future development of the fate of Judah and of the attitude of Edom towards it, which go on fulfilling themselves more and more until the day of the Lord upon all nations, upon the near approach of which Obadiah founds his warning in ver. 15. The warning proceeds in vers. 12-14 from the general to the particular, or from the lower to the higher. Obadiah warns the Edomites, as Hitzig says, "not to rejoice in Judah's troubles (ver. 12), nor to make common cause with the conquerors (ver. 13), nor to outdo and complete the work of the enemy (ver. 14)." By the cop. *Vav*, which stands at the head of all the three clauses in ver. 12, the warning addressed to the Edomites, against such conduct as this, is linked on to what they had already done. The three clauses of ver. 12 contain a warning in a graduated form against malicious pleasure. רָאָה

with ב, to look at anything with pleasure, to take delight in it, affirms less than שָׂמַח בְּ, to rejoice, to proclaim one's joy without reserve. הִנְדִּיל פֶּה, to make the mouth large, is stronger still, like הִנְדִּיל בִּפִּהוּ, to boast, to do great things with the mouth, equivalent to הִרְחִיב פֶּה עַל, to make the mouth broad, to stretch it open, over (against) a person (Ps. xxxv. 21; Isa. lvii. 4), a gesture indicating contempt and derision. The object of their malicious pleasure mentioned in the first clause is *yōm 'āchikkā*, the day of thy brother, i.e. the day upon which something strange happened to him, namely, what is mentioned in ver. 11. *Yōm* does not of itself signify the disastrous day, or day of ruin, either here or anywhere else; but it always receives the more precise definition from the context. If we were to adopt the rendering "disastrous day," it would give rise to a pure tautology when taken in connection with what follows. The expression 'āchikkā (*of thy brother*) justifies the warning. יוֹם נִכְרוֹ is not in apposition to יוֹם אֶחָיִךְ, but, according to the parallelism of the clauses, it is a statement of time. נִכְרָה, ἀπ. λεγ. = נִכְרָה (Job xxxi. 3), *fortuna aliena*, a strange, i.e. hostile fate, not "rejection" (Hitzig, Caspari, and others). The expression יוֹם אֶבְרָם, the day of their (Judah's sons) perishing, is stronger still; although the perishing ('ābhōd) of the sons of Judah cannot denote the destruction of the whole nation, since the following word *tsārdh*, calamity, is much too weak to admit of this. Even the word אָרַב, which occurs three times in ver. 13, does not signify destruction, but (from the root אָרַב, to fall heavily, to load) simply pressure, a burden, then weight of suffering, distress, misfortune (see Delitzsch on Job xviii. 12). In ver. 13 Obadiah warns against taking part in the plundering of Jerusalem. The gate of my people: for the city in which the people dwell, the capital (see Mic. i. 9). Look not thou also, a brother nation, upon his calamity, as enemies do, i.e. do not delight thyself thereat, nor snatch at his possessions. The form *tishlachnāh*, for which we should expect *tishlach*, is not yet satisfactorily explained (for the different attempts that have been made to explain it, see Caspari). The passages in which *nāh* is appended to the third pers. fem. sing., to distinguish it from the second person, do not help us to explain it. Ewald and Olshausen would therefore alter the text, and read תִּשְׁלַח. But תִּ is not absolutely necessary, since it is omitted in 2 Sam.

vi. 6, xxii. 17, or Ps. xviii. 17, where *shkilach* occurs in the sense of stretching out the hand. *חֵילוֹ*, his possessions. On the fact itself, compare Joel iv. 5. The prominence given to the day of misfortune at the end of every sentence is very emphatic; "inasmuch as the selection of the time of a brother's calamity, as that in which to rage against him with such cunning and malicious pleasure, was doubly culpable" (Ewald). In ver. 14 the warning proceeds to the worst crime of all, their seizing upon the Judæan fugitives, for the purpose of murdering them or delivering them up to the enemy. *Pereq* signifies here the place where the roads break or divide, the cross-road. In Nah. iii. 1, the only other place in which it occurs, it signifies tearing in pieces, violence. *Hisgir*, to deliver up (lit. *concludendum tradidit*), is generally construed with *אֶל* (Deut. xxiii. 16) or *בְּיָד* (Ps. xxxi. 9; 1 Sam. xxiii. 11). Here it is written absolutely with the same meaning: not "to apprehend, or so overpower that there is no escape left" (Hitzig). This would affirm too little after the preceding *הִכְרִיתָהּ*, and cannot be demonstrated from Job xi. 10, where *hisgir* means to keep in custody.

This warning is supported in ver. 15 by an announcement of the day of the Lord, in which Edom and all the enemies of Israel will receive just retribution for their sins against Israel. Ver. 15. "*For the day of Jehovah is near upon all nations. As thou hast done, it will be done to thee; what thou hast performed returns upon thy head.*" Ver. 16. "*For as ye have drunken upon my holy mountain, all nations will drink continually, and drink and swallow, and will be as those that were not.*" *כִּי* (for) connects what follows with the warnings in vers. 12-14, but not also, or exclusively, with vers. 10, 11, as Rosenmüller and others suppose, for vers. 12-14 are not inserted parenthetically. "The day of Jehovah" has been explained at Joel i. 15. The expression was first formed by Obadiah, not by Joel; and Joel, Isaiah, and the prophets that follow, adopted it from Obadiah. The primary meaning is not the day of judgment, but the day on which Jehovah reveals His majesty and omnipotence in a glorious manner, to overthrow all ungodly powers, and to complete His kingdom. It was this which gave rise to the idea of the day of judgment and retribution which predominates in the prophetic announcements, but which simply forms one side of the revelation of the glory of God, as our passage at once shows;

inasmuch as it describes Jehovah as not only judging all nations and rewarding them according to their deeds (cf. vers. 15b, 16), but as providing deliverance upon Zion (ver. 17), and setting up His kingdom (ver. 21). The retribution will correspond to the actions of Edom and of the nations. For *בְּמִלְחָתוֹ*, compare Joel iii. 4, 7, where (vers. 2-7) the evil deeds of the nations, what they have done against the people of God, are described. In ver. 16 Obadiah simply mentions as the greatest crime the desecration of the holy mountain by drinking carousals, for which all nations are to drink the intoxicating cup of the wrath of God till they are utterly destroyed. In *sh'iththem* (ye have drunk) it is not the Judæans who are addressed, as many commentators, from Ab. Ezra to Ewald and Meier, suppose, but the Edomites. This is required not only by the parallelism of *בְּאִשְׁרֵי שְׁתִּיתֶם* (as ye have drunk) and *בְּאִשְׁרֵי עָשִׂיתָ* (as thou hast done), but also by the actual wording and context. *בְּאִשְׁרֵי שְׁתִּיתֶם* *עַל הָרִי* cannot mean "as ye who are upon my holy mountain have drunk;" and in the announcement of the retribution which all nations will receive for the evil they have done to Judah, it is impossible that either the Judæans should be addressed, or a parallel drawn between their conduct and that of the nations. Moreover, throughout the whole of the prophecy Edom only is addressed, and never Judah. Mount Zion is called "my holy mountain," because Jehovah was there enthroned in His sanctuary. The verb *sh'ithah* is used in the two clauses in different senses: viz. *sh'iththem*, of the drinking carousals which the Edomites held upon Zion, like *yishta* in Joel iii. 3; and *sh'ithu*, in the apodosis, of the drinking of the intoxicating goblet (cf. Isa. li. 17; Jer. xxv. 15, xlix. 12, etc.), as the expression "they shall be as though they had not been" clearly shows. At the same time, we cannot infer from the words "all nations will drink," that all nations would succeed in taking Zion and abusing it, but that they would have to taste all the bitterness of their crime; for it is not stated that they are to drink upon Mount Zion. The fact that the antithesis to *שְׁתִּיתֶם* is not *תִּשְׁתּוּ* ("ye will drink") but *יִשְׁתּוּ*, does not compel us to generalize *sh'iththem*, and regard all nations as addressed *implicite* in the Edomites. The difficulty arising from this antithesis cannot be satisfactorily removed by the remark of Caspari, that in consequence of the allusion to

the day of the Lord upon all nations in ver. 15, the judgment upon all nations and that upon the Edomites were thought of as inseparably connected, or that this induced Obadiah to place opposite to the sins of the Edomites, not their own punishment, but the punishment of all nations, more especially as, according to ver. 11, it must necessarily be assumed that the foreign nations participated in the sin of Edom. For this leaves the question unanswered, how Obadiah came to speak at all (ver. 15) of the day of the Lord upon all nations. The circumstance that, according to ver. 11, heathen nations had plundered Jerusalem, and committed crimes like those for which Edom is condemned in vers. 12-14, does not lead directly to the day of judgment upon *all* nations, but simply to a judgment upon Edom and the nations which had committed like sins. The difficulty is only removed by the assumption that Obadiah regarded Edom as a type of the nations that had risen up in hostility to the Lord and His people, and were judged by the Lord in consequence, so that what he says of Edom applies to all nations which assume the same or a similar attitude towards the people of God. From this point of view he could, without reserve, extend to all nations the retribution which would fall upon Edom for its sins. They should drink *tāmīd*, *i.e.* not at once, as Ewald has rendered it in opposition to the usage of the language, but "continually." This does not mean, however, that "there will be no time in which there will not be one of the nations drinking the intoxicating cup, and being destroyed by drinking thereof; or that the nations will come in turn, and therefore in a long immeasurable series, one after the other, to drink the cup of intoxication," as Caspari supposes, but "continually, so that the turn never passes from the heathen to Judah, Isa. li. 22, 23" (Hitzig). This drinking is more precisely defined as drinking and swallowing (𐤒), in Syriac, to devour or swallow, hence 𐤒, a throat, so called from the act of swallowing, Prov. xxiii. 2), *i.e.* drinking in full draughts; and the effect, "they will be like such as have not been, have never existed" (cf. Job x. 19), *i.e.* they will be utterly destroyed as nations.

**Vers. 17-21. THE KINGDOM OF JEHOVAH ESTABLISHED UPON ZION.**—The prophecy advances from the judgment upon

all the heathen to the completion of the kingdom of God by the raising up of Israel to world-wide dominion. While the judgment is falling upon all the heathen nations, Mount Zion will be an asylum for those who are delivered. Judah and Israel will capture the possessions of the nations, destroy Edom, and extend its borders on every side (vers. 17-19). The Israelites scattered among the nations will return into their enlarged inheritances, and upon Zion will saviours arise, to judge Edom, and the kingdom will then be the Lord's (vers. 20, 21). This promise is appended as an antithesis to the proclamation of judgment in ver. 16. Ver. 17. "*But upon Mount Zion will be that which has been saved, and it will be a sanctuary, and the house of Jacob will take possession of their possessions.*" Upon Mount Zion, which the Edomites have now desecrated by drinking carousals, there will then, when the nations are obliged to drink the cup of intoxication even to their utter destruction, be *p'letâh*, that which has escaped, *i.e.* the multitude of those who have been rescued and preserved throughout the judgment. See the explanation of this at Joel ii. 32, where this thought is still further expounded. Mount Zion is the seat of the kingdom of Jehovah (cf. ver. 21). There the Lord is enthroned (Joel iii. 17), and His rescued people with Him. And it (Mount Zion) will be *qôdesh*, a sanctuary, *i.e.* inviolable; the heathen will no more dare to tread it and defile it (Joel iii. 17). It follows from this, that the rescued crowd upon it will also be a holy people ("a holy seed," Isa. vi. 13). This sanctified people of the Lord, the house of Jacob, will capture the possessions of their foes. The suffix attached to מוֹרְשֵׁיהֶם is supposed by many to refer to בֵּית יַעֲקֹב: those of the house of Jacob, *i.e.* the rescued Israelites, will take their former possessions once more. This view cannot be overthrown by the simple remark that *yârash* cannot mean to take possession again; for that meaning might be given to it by the context, as, for example, in Deut. xxx. 5. But it is a decisive objection to it, that neither in what precedes nor in what follows is there any reference to Israel as having been carried away. The penetration of foes into the gates of Jerusalem, the plundering of the city, and the casting of lots upon the booty and the prisoners (ver. 11), do not involve the carrying away of the whole nation into exile; and the *gâluth* of the sons of Israel and Jerusalem in

ver. 20 is clearly distinguished from the "house of Jacob" in ver. 18. And since we have first of all (vers. 18, 19) an announcement of the conquest of Edom by the house of Jacob, and the capture of the mountains of Esau, of Philistia, etc., by the inhabitants of the south-land, *i.e.* by Judæans; and then in ver. 20 the possession of the south-land is promised to the *gáluth* (captivity); this *gáluth* can only have been a small fragment of the nation, and therefore the carrying away can only have extended to a number of prisoners of war, whilst the kernel of the nation had remained in the land, *i.e.* in its own possessions. The objection offered to this, namely, that if we refer the suffix in *mōrāshēhem* (their possessions) to *kōl-haggōyīm* (all nations), Judah would have to take possession of *all* nations, which is quite incredible and even at variance with vers. 19, 20, inasmuch as the only enemies' land mentioned there (ver. 19) is the territory of the Edomites and Philistines, whilst the other countries or portions of country mentioned there are not enemies' land at all. For there is no incredibility in the taking of the land of all nations by Judah, except on the assumption that Judah merely denotes the posterity or remnant of the citizens of the earthly kingdom of Judah. But this is not what Obadiah says. He does not mention Judah, but the house of Jacob, and means thereby not the natural Israel, but the people of God, who are eventually to obtain the dominion of the world. The discrepancy between ver. 17*b* and ver. 19 is not greater than that between שְׂחִיתָם in ver. 16*a* and יִשְׂרָאֵל in ver. 16*b*, and disappears if we only recognise the fact that Edom and the Philistines are simply mentioned in ver. 19 as types of the heathen world in its hostility to God. We therefore regard the application of the expression *mōrāshēhem* to the possessions of the heathen nations as the only correct one, and that all the more because the יִרְשֵׁי in ver. 19 is very clearly seen to be a more exact explanation of the יִרְשֵׁי in ver. 17*b*. In ver. 17 Obadiah gives, in a few brief words, the sum and substance of the salvation which awaits the people of the Lord in the future. This salvation is unfolded still further in what follows, and first of all in vers. 18, 19, by a fuller exposition of the thought expressed in ver. 17*b*.

Ver. 18. "*And the house of Jacob will be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble. And*



*they will burn among them, and consume them, and there will not be one left to the house of Esau, for Jehovah hath spoken.*" This verse not only resumes the discussion of the retribution, so that it corresponds to ver. 15, but it also affirms, as an appendix to ver. 17, that Edom is to be utterly destroyed. By the "house of Jacob" Judah is intended, as the co-ordination of the house of Joseph, *i.e.* of the ten tribes, clearly shows. The assumption that "house of Jacob" signifies all Israel, in connection with which that portion is also especially mentioned, which might be supposed to be excluded (Rosenmüller, Hengstenberg, and others), is at variance with such passages as Isa. xlv. 3, "the house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel," where the reason assigned for the co-ordination is not applicable. Obadiah uses the name Jacob for Judah, because ever since the division of the kingdoms Judah alone has represented the people of God, the ten tribes having fallen away from the kingdom of God for a time. In the future, however, Judah and Israel are to be united again (*vid.* Hos. ii. 2; Ezek. xxxvii. 16; Jer. xxxi. 18), and unitedly to attack and overcome their foes (Isa. xi. 13, 14). Obadiah distinctly mentions the house of Joseph, *i.e.* of the ten tribes, in this passage and in this alone, for the purpose of guarding against the idea that the ten tribes are to be shut out from the future salvation. For the figure of the flame of fire which consumes stubble, see Isa. v. 24 and x. 17. For the expression, "for Jehovah hath spoken," compare Joel iii. 8.

After the destruction of its foes the nation of God will take possession of their land, and extend its territory to every region under heaven. Ver. 19. *"And those towards the south will take possession of the mountains of Esau; and those in the lowland, of the Philistines: and they will take possession of the fields of Ephraim, and the fields of Samaria; and Benjamin (will take possession) of Gilead.* Ver. 20. *And the captives of this army of the sons of Israel (will take possession) of what Canaanites there are as far as Zarephath; and the prisoners of Jerusalem that are in Sepharad will take possession of the cities of the south."* In יִרְשֵׁי בֵּית ' the expression יִרְשֵׁי בֵּית ' in ver. 17b is more precisely defined, and the house of Jacob, *i.e.* the kingdom of Judah, is divided into the Negeb, the Shephelah, and Benjamin, to each of which a special district is assigned,

of which it will take possession, the countries being mentioned in the place of their inhabitants. The *negebh*, or southern land of Judah (see the comm. on Josh. xv. 21), *i.e.* the inhabitants thereof, will take possession of the mountains of Esau, and therefore extend their territory eastwards; whilst those of the lowland (*sh'phēlāh*; see at Josh. xv. 33), on the Mediterranean, will seize upon the Philistines, that is to say, upon their land, and therefore spread out towards the west. The subject to the second יִרְשִׁי is not mentioned, and must be determined from the context: viz. the men of Judah, with the exception of the inhabitants of the *Negeb* and *Shephelah* already mentioned, that is to say, strictly speaking, those of the mountains of Judah, the original stock of the land of Judah (Josh. xv. 48-60). Others would leave *hannegebh* and *hassh'phēlāh* still in force as subjects; so that the thought expressed would be this: The inhabitants of the south land and of the lowland will also take possession in addition to this of the fields of Ephraim and Samaria. But not only is the parallelism of the clauses, according to which one particular portion of territory is assigned to each part, utterly destroyed, but according to this view the principal part of Judah is entirely passed over without any perceptible reason. *Sādeh*, fields, used rhetorically for land or territory. Along with Ephraim the land, Samaria the capital is especially mentioned, just as we frequently find Jerusalem along with Judah. In the last clause יִרְשִׁי (shall take possession of) is to be repeated after *Benjamin*. From the taking of the territories of the kingdom of the ten tribes by Judah and Benjamin, we are not to infer that the territory of the ten tribes was either compared to an enemy's land, or thought of as depopulated; but the thought is simply this: Judah and Benjamin, the two tribes, which formed the kingdom of God in the time of Obadiah, will extend their territory to all the four quarters of the globe, and take possession of all Canaan beyond its former boundaries. Hengstenberg has rightly shown that we have here simply an individualizing description of the promise in Gen. xxviii. 14, "thy seed will be as the dust of the ground; and thou breakest out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south," etc.; *i.e.* that on the ground of this promise Obadiah predicts the future restoration of the kingdom of God, and its extension beyond the borders of Canaan. In this he looks away from

the ten tribes, because in his esteem the kingdom of Judah alone constituted the kingdom or people of God. But he has shown clearly enough in ver. 18 that he does not regard them as enemies of Judah, or as separated from the kingdom of God, but as being once more united to Judah as the people of God. And being thus incorporated again into the people of God, he thinks of them as dwelling with them upon the soil of Judah, so that they are included in the population of the four districts of this kingdom. For this reason, no other places of abode are assigned to the Ephraimites and Gileadites. The idea that they are to be transplanted altogether to heathen territory, rests upon a misapprehension of the true facts of the case, and has no support whatever in ver. 20. "The sons of Israel" in ver. 20 cannot be the ten tribes, as Hengstenberg supposes, because the other portion of the covenant nation mentioned along with them would in that case be described as Judah, not as Jerusalem. "The sons of Israel" answer to the "Jacob" in ver. 10, and the "house of Jacob" in ver. 17, in connection with which special prominence is given to Jerusalem in ver. 11, and to Mount Zion in ver. 17; so that it is the Judæans who are referred to,—not, however, as distinguished from the ten tribes, but as the people of God, with whom the house of Jacob is once more united. In connection with the *gáluth* (captivity) of the sons of Israel, the *gáluth* of Jerusalem is also mentioned, like the sons of Judah and the sons of Jerusalem in Joel iii. 6, of whom Joel affirms, with a glance at Obadiah, that the Phœnicians and Philistines have sold them to the sons of Javan. These citizens of Judah and Jerusalem, who have been taken prisoners in war, are called by Obadiah the *gáluth* of the sons of Israel and Jerusalem, the people of God being here designated by the name of their tribe-father Jacob or Israel. That we should understand by the "sons of Israel" Judah, as the tribe or kernel of the covenant nation, is required by the actual progress apparent in ver. 20 in relation to ver. 19. After Obadiah had foretold to the house of Jacob in vers. 17b-19 that it would take possession of the land of their enemies, and spread beyond the borders of Canaan, the question still remained to be answered, What would become of the prisoners, and those who had been carried away captive, according to vers. 11 and 14? This is explained in ver. 20. The

carrying away of the sons of Israel is restricted to a portion of the nation by the words, "the captivity of *this* host" (*hachēl-hazzeḥ*); no such carrying away of the nation as such had taken place at that time as that which afterwards occurred at the destruction of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. The enemies who had conquered Jerusalem had contented themselves with carrying away those who fell into their hands. The expression *hachēl-hazzeḥ* points to this host which had been carried away captive. חַל, which the LXX. and some of the Rabbins have taken as a verbal noun, ἡ ἀρχή, *initium*, is a defective form of חַיִל, an army (2 Kings xviii. 7; Isa. xxxvi. 2), like חַק for חֵיק in Prov. v. 20, xvii. 23, xxi. 14, and is not to be identified with חַל, the trench of a fortification. The two clauses in ver. 20 have only one verb, which renders the meaning of צָרַפְתָּ . . . אֲשֶׁר בְּנֵי כ' ambiguous. The Chaldee (according to our editions, though not according to Kimchi's account) and the Masoretes (by placing *athnach* under *s'phârād*), also Rashi and others, take אֲשֶׁר בְּנֵעִים as in apposition to the subject: those prisoners of the sons of Israel who are among the Canaanites to Zarephath. And the parallelism to אֲשֶׁר בְּסַפְרָד appears to favour this; but it is decidedly negatived by the absence of ב before בְּנֵעִים. אֲשֶׁר בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל can only mean, "who are Canaanites." But this, when taken as in apposition to בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, gives no sustainable meaning. For the sons of Israel could only be called Canaanites when they had adopted the nature of Canaan. And any who had done this could look for no share in the salvation of the Lord, and no return to the land of the Lord. We must therefore take אֲשֶׁר בְּנֵעִים as the object, and supply the verb יִרְשִׁי from the first clauses of the preceding verse. Obadiah first of all expresses the verb twice, then omits it in the next two clauses (ver. 19*d* and 20*a*), and inserts it again in the last clause (ver. 20*b*). The meaning is, that the army of these sons of Israel, who have been carried away captive, will take possession of what Canaanites there are as far as *Zarephath*, i.e. the Phœnician city of *Sarepta*, the present *Surafend*, between Tyre and Sidon on the sea-coast (see comm. on 1 Kings xvii. 9). The capture of the land of the enemy presupposes a return to the fatherland. The exiles of Jerusalem shall take possession of the south country, the inhabitants of which have pushed forward into Edom. בְּסַפְרָד (in Sepharad) is difficult, and has

never yet been satisfactorily explained, as the word does not occur again. The rendering *Spain*, which we find in the Chaldee and Syriac, is probably only an inference drawn from Joel iii. 6; and the Jewish rendering *Bosphorus*, which is cited by Jerome, is simply founded upon the similarity in the name. The supposed connection between this name and the *çPaRaD*, or *çparda*, mentioned in the great arrow-headed inscription of Nakshi Rustam in a list of names of tribes between *Katpadhuka* (Cappadocia) and *Yunā* (Ionia), in which Sylv. de Sacy imagined that he had found our Sepharad, has apparently more to favour it, since the resemblance is very great. But if *çparda* is the Persian form for *Sardis* (Σάρδεις or Σάρδεϊς), which was written *çvarda* in the native (Lydian) tongue, as Lassen maintains, *Sepharad* cannot be the same as *çparda*, inasmuch as the Hebrews did not receive the name ספרד through the Persians; and the native *çvarda*, apart from the fact that it is merely postulated, would be written סויר in Hebrew. To this we may add, that the impossibility of proving that *Sardis* was ever used for Lydia, precludes our rendering *çparda* by *Sardis*. It is much more natural to connect the name with Σπάρτη (*Sparta*) and Σπαρτιάται (1 Macc. xiv. 16, 20, 23, xii. 2, 5, 6), and assume that the Hebrews had heard the name from the Phœnicians in connection with Javan, as the name of a land in the far west.<sup>1</sup> The cities of the south country stand in antithesis to the Canaanites as far as Zarephath in the north; and these two regions are mentioned synecdochically for all the countries round about Canaan, like "the breaking forth of Israel on the right hand and on the left, that its seed may inherit the Gentiles," which is promised in Isa. liv. 3. The description is rounded off by the closing reference to the south country, in which it returns to the point whence it started.

With the taking of the lands of the Gentiles, the full dis-

<sup>1</sup> The appellative rendering *ἡ διασπορά* (Hendewerk and Maurer) is certainly to be rejected; and Ewald's conjecture, ספרים, "a place three hours' journey from Acco," in support of which he refers to Niebuhr, *R. iii.* p. 269, is a very thoughtless one. For Niebuhr there mentions the village of *Serfati* as the abode of the prophet Elijah, and refers to Maundrell, who calls the village *Sarphan*, *Serephat*, and *Serepta*, in which every thoughtful reader must recognise the biblical Zarephath, and the present village of *Surafend*.

play of salvation begins in Zion. Ver. 21. "*And saviours go up on Mount Zion to judge the mountains of Esau; and the kingdom will be Jehovah's.*" *עלה* followed by *?* does not mean to go up to a place, but to climb to the top of (Deut. v. 5; Ps. xxiv. 3; Jer. iv. 29, v. 10), or into (Jer. ix. 20). Consequently there is no allusion in *עלה* to the return from exile. Going up to the top of Mount Zion simply means, that at the time when Israel captures the possessions of the heathen, Mount Zion will receive and have saviours who will judge Edom. And as the mountains of Esau represent the heathen world, so Mount Zion, as the seat of the Old Testament kingdom of God, is the type of the kingdom of God in its fully developed form. *מוֹשְׁעִים*, which is written defectively *מוֹשְׁעִים* in some of the ancient MSS., and has consequently been rendered incorrectly *σεσωσμένοι* and *ἀνασωζόμενοι* by the LXX., Aq., Theod., and the Syriac, signifies *salvatores*, deliverers, saviours. The expression is selected with an allusion to the olden time, in which Jehovah saved His people by judges out of the power of their enemies (Judg. ii. 16, iii. 9, 15, etc.). "The *מוֹשְׁעִים* are heroes, resembling the judges, who are to defend and deliver Mount Zion and its inhabitants, when they are threatened and oppressed by enemies" (Caspari). The object of their activity, however, is not Israel, but Edom, the representative of all the enemies of Israel. The mountains of Esau are mentioned instead of the people, partly on account of the antithesis to the mountain of Zion, and partly also to express the thought of supremacy not only over the people, but over the land of the heathen also. *Shâphat* is not to be restricted in this case to the judging or settling of disputes, but includes the conduct of the government, the exercise of dominion in its fullest extent, so that the "judging of the mountains of Esau" expresses the dominion of the people of God over the heathen world. Under the saviours, as Hengstenberg has correctly observed, the Saviour *par excellence* is concealed. This is not brought prominently out, nor is it even distinctly affirmed; but it is assumed as self-evident, from the history of the olden time, that the saviours are raised up by Jehovah for His people. The following and concluding thought, that the kingdom will be Jehovah's, i.e. that Jehovah will show Himself to the whole world as King of the world, and Ruler in His kingdom, and will be acknow-

ledged by the nations of the earth, either voluntarily or by constraint, rests upon this assumption. God was indeed King already, not as the Almighty Ruler of the universe, for this is not referred to here, but as King in Israel, over which His kingdom did extend. But this His royal sway was not acknowledged by the heathen world, and could not be, more especially when He had to deliver Israel up to the power of its enemies, on account of its sins. This acknowledgment, however, He would secure for Himself, by the destruction of the heathen power in the overthrow of Edom, and by the exaltation of His people to dominion over all nations. Through this mighty saving act He will establish His kingdom over the whole earth (cf. Joel iii. 21; Mic. iv. 7; Isa. xxiv. 23). "The coming of this kingdom began with Christ, and looks for its complete fulfilment in Him" (Hengstenberg).

If now, in conclusion, we cast another glance at the fulfilment of our whole prophecy; the fulfilment of that destruction by the nations, with which the Edomites are threatened (vers. 1-9), commenced in the Chaldean period. For although no express historical evidence exists as to the subjugation of the Edomites by Nebuchadnezzar, since Josephus (*Ant.* x. 9, 7) says nothing about the Edomites, who dwelt between the Moabites and Egypt, in the account which he gives of Nebuchadnezzar's expedition against Egypt, five years after the destruction of Jerusalem, in which he subdued the Ammonites and Moabites; the devastation of Edom by the Chaldeans may unquestionably be inferred from Jer. xlix. 7 sqq. and Ezek. xxxv., when compared with Jer. xxv. 9, 21, and Mal. i. 3. In Jer. xxv. 21 the Edomites are mentioned among the nations round about Judah, whom the Lord would deliver up into the hand of His servant Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. xxv. 9), and to whom Jeremiah was to present the cup of the wine of wrath from the hand of Jehovah; and they are placed between the Philistines and the Moabites. And according to Mal. i. 3, Jehovah made the mountains of Esau into a wilderness; and this can only refer to the desolation of the land of Edom by the Chaldeans (see at Mal. i. 3). It is true, that at that time the Edomites could still think of rebuilding their ruins; but the threat of Malachi, "If they build, I shall pull down, saith the Lord," was subsequently fulfilled, although no accounts have been


handed down as to the fate of Edom in the time of Alexander the Great and his successors. The destruction of the Edomites as a nation was commenced by the Maccabees. After Judas Maccabæus had defeated them several times (1 Macc. v. 3 and 65; Jos. *Ant.* xii. 18, 1), John Hyrcanus subdued them entirely about 129 B.C., and compelled them to submit to circumcision, and observe the Mosaic law (Jos. *Ant.* xiii. 9, 1), whilst Alexander Jannæus also subjugated the last of the Edomites (xiii. 15, 4). And the loss of their national independence, which they thereby sustained, was followed by utter destruction at the hands of the Romans. To punish them for the cruelties which they had practised in Jerusalem in connection with the Zelots, immediately before the siege of that city by the Romans (Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, iv. 5, 1, 2), Simon the Gerasene devastated their land in a fearful manner (*Wars of the Jews*, iv. 9, 7); whilst the Idumæans in Jerusalem, who took the side of Simon (v. 6, 1), were slain by the Romans along with the Jews. The few Edomites who still remained were lost among the Arabs; so that the Edomitish people was "cut off for ever" (ver. 10) by the Romans, and its very name disappeared from the earth. Passing on to the rest of the prophecy, Edom filled up the measure of its sins against its brother nation Israel, against which Obadiah warns it in vers. 12–14, at the taking and destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans (*vid.* Ezek. xxxv. 5, 10; Ps. cxxxvii. 7; Lam. iv. 22). The fulfilment of the threat in ver. 18 we cannot find, however, in the subjugation of the Edomites by the Maccabæans, and the devastating expedition of Simon the Gerasene, as Caspari and others do, although it is apparently favoured by the statement in Ezek. xxv. 14, that Jehovah would fulfil His vengeance upon Edom by the hand of His people Israel. For even if this prophecy of Ezekiel may have been fulfilled in the events just mentioned, we are precluded from understanding Ob. 18, and the parallel passages, Amos ix. 11, 12, and Num. xxiv. 18, as referring to the same events, by the fact that the destruction of Edom, and the capture of Seir by Israel, are to proceed, according to Num. xxiv. 18, from the Ruler to arise out of Jacob (the Messiah), and that they were to take place, according to Amos ix. 11, 12, in connection with the raising up of the fallen hut of David, and according to



Obadiah, in the day of Jehovah, along with and after the judgment upon all nations. Consequently the fulfilment of vers. 17-21 can only belong to the Messianic times, and that in such a way that it commenced with the founding of the kingdom of Christ on the earth, advances with its extension among all nations, and will terminate in a complete fulfilment at the second coming of our Lord.

# JONAH.

## INTRODUCTION.

1.  HE PROPHEET.—We know from 2 Kings xiv. 25 that *Jonah* the son of Amittai was born in Gath-Hepher, in the tribe of Zebulon, which was, according to Jewish tradition as given by Jerome, “*haud grandis viculus Geth*,” to the north of Nazareth, on the road from Sephoris to Tiberias, on the site of the present village of Meshad (see at Josh. xix. 13); that he lived in the reign of Jeroboam II., and foretold to this king the success of his arms in his war with the Syrians, for the restoration of the ancient boundaries of the kingdom; and that this prophecy was fulfilled. From the book before us we learn that the same Jonah (for this is evident from the fact that the name of the father is also the same) received a command from the Lord to go to Nineveh, and announce the destruction of that city on account of its sins. This mission to Nineveh evidently falls later than the prophecy in favour of Jeroboam; but although it is quite possible that it is to be assigned to the time of Menahem, during the period of the first invasion of Israel by the Assyrians, this is by no means so probable as many have assumed. For, inasmuch as Menahem began to reign fifty-three years after the commencement of the reign of Jeroboam, and the war between Jeroboam and the Syrians took place not in the closing years, but in the very first years of his reign, since it was only the continuation and conclusion of the successful struggle which his father had already begun with these enemies of Israel; Jonah must have been a very old man when he was entrusted with his mission to Nineveh, if it did not take place till after the invasion of Israel by Pul. Nothing is known of the circumstances of Jonah's life apart from these biblical notices. The Jewish tradition mentioned by Jerome

in the *Proœm.* to Jonah, to the effect that Jonah was the son of the widow at Zarephath, whom Elijah restored to life (1 Kings xvii. 17-24), which has been still further expounded by Ps. Epiph. and Ps. Doroth. (see Carpzov, *Introd.* ii. pp. 346-7), is proved to be nothing more than a Jewish Hagada, founded upon the name "son of Amittai" (LXX. *υἱὸν Ἀμιθι*), and has just as much historical evidence to support it as the tradition concerning the prophet's grave, which is pointed out in Meshad of Galilee, and also in Nineveh in Assyria, for the simple reason adduced by Jerome (*l.c.*): *matre postea dicente ad eum: nunc cognovi, quia vir Dei es tu, et verbum Dei in ore tuo est veritas; et ob hanc causam etiam ipsum puerum sic vocatum, Amathi enim in nostra lingua veritatem sonat.*

2. THE BOOK OF JONAH resembles, in contents and form, the narratives concerning the prophets in the historical books of the Old Testament, *e.g.* the history of Elijah and Elisha (1 Kings xvii.-xix.; 2 Kings ii. 4-6), rather than the writings of the minor prophets. It contains no prophetic words concerning Nineveh, but relates in simple prose the sending of Jonah to that city to foretel its destruction; the behaviour of the prophet on receiving this divine command; his attempt to escape from it by flight to Tarshish; the way in which this sin was expiated; and lastly, when the command of God had been obeyed, not only the successful result of his preaching of repentance, but also his murmuring at the sparing of Nineveh in consequence of the repentance of its inhabitants, and the reproof administered by God to the murmuring prophet. If, then, notwithstanding this, the compilers of the canon have placed the book among the minor prophets, this can only have been done because they were firmly convinced that the prophet Jonah was the author. And, indeed, the objections offered to the genuineness of the book, apart from doctrinal reasons for disputing its historical truth and credibility, and the proofs adduced of its having a much later origin, are extremely trivial, and destitute of any conclusive force. It is said that, apart from the miraculous portion, the narrative is wanting in clearness and perspicuity. "The author," says Hitzig, "leaps over the long and wearisome journey to Nineveh, says nothing about Jonah's subsequent fate, or about his previous abode, or

the spot where he was cast upon the land, or the name of the Assyrian king; in brief, he omits all the more minute details which are necessarily connected with a true history." But the assertion that completeness in all external circumstances, which would serve to gratify curiosity rather than to help to an understanding of the main facts of the case, is indispensable to the truth of any historical narrative, is one which might expose the whole of the historical writings of antiquity to criticism, but can never shake their truth. There is not a single one of the ancient historians in whose works such completeness as this can be found: and still less do the biblical historians aim at communicating such things as have no close connection with the main object of their narrative, or with the religious significance of the facts themselves. Proofs of the later origin of the book have also been sought for in the language employed, and in the circumstance that Jonah's prayer in ch. ii. 3-10 contains so many reminiscences from the Psalms, that Ph. D. Burk has called it *præstantissimum exemplum psalterii recte applicati*. But the so-called Aramaisms, such as הָטִיל to throw (ch. i. 4, 5, 12, etc.), the interchange of סָפִינָה with אֲנִיָּה (ch. i. 5), כָּמָה to determine, to appoint (ch. ii. 1, iv. 6 sqq.), הָחַר in the supposed sense of rowing (ch. i. 13), הִתְעִשָּׂה to remember (ch. i. 6), and the forms בָּשָׁלְכִי (ch. i. 7), בָּשָׁלִי (ch. i. 12), and שׁ for אָשָׁר (ch. iv. 10), belong either to the speech of Galilee or the language of ordinary intercourse, and are very far from being proofs of a later age, since it cannot be proved with certainty that any one of these words was unknown in the early Hebrew usage, and שׁ for אָשָׁר occurs as early as Judg. v. 7, vi. 17, and even שָׁלִי in Song of Sol. i. 6, viii. 12, whilst in the book before us it is only in the sayings of the persons acting (ch. i. 7, 12), or of God (ch. iv. 10), that it is used. The only non-Hebraic word, viz. מַעַם, which is used in the sense of command, and applied to the edict of the king of Assyria, was heard by Jonah in Nineveh, where it was used as a technical term, and was transferred by him. The reminiscences which occur in Jonah's prayer are all taken from the Psalms of David or his contemporaries, which were generally known in Israel long before the prophet's day.<sup>1</sup> Lastly, the statement in ch. iii. 3, that

<sup>1</sup> They are the following: ver. 3a is formed from Ps. xviii. 7 and cxx. 1; ver. 4b is taken literally from Ps. xlii. 8; ver. 5a from Ps. xxxi. 23, whilst

"Nineveh was an exceeding great city," neither proves that Nineveh had already been destroyed at the time when this was written, nor that the greatness of Nineveh was unknown to the contemporaries of Jonah, though there would be nothing surprising in the latter, as in all probability very few Israelites had seen Nineveh at that time. הֵיִתָּהּ is the synchronistic imperfect, just as in Gen. i. 2. Nineveh was a great city of three days' journey when Jonah reached it, *i.e.* he found it so, as Staendlin observes, and even De Wette admits.

The doctrinal objections to the miraculous contents of the book appear to be much more weighty; since it is undeniable that, if they were of the character represented by the opponents, this would entirely preclude the possibility of its having been composed by the prophet Jonah, and prove that it had originated in a mythical legend. "The whole narrative," says Hitzig in his prolegomena to the book of Jonah, "is miraculous and fabulous. But nothing is impossible with God. Hence Jonah lives in the belly of the fish without being suffocated; hence the *Qiqāyōn* springs up during the night to such a height that it overshadows a man in a sitting posture. As Jehovah bends everything in the world to His own purposes at pleasure, the marvellous coincidences had nothing in them to astonish the author. The lot falls upon the right man; the tempest rises most opportunely, and is allayed at the proper time; and the fish is ready at hand to swallow Jonah, and vomit him out again. So, again, the tree is ready to sprout up, the worm to kill it, and the burning wind to make its loss perceptible." But the coarse view of God and of divine providence apparent in all this, which borders very closely upon atheism, by no means proves that the contents of the book are fabulous, but simply that the history of Jonah cannot be vindicated, still less understood, without the acknowledgment of a living God, and of His activity in the sphere of natural and human life.<sup>1</sup> The book of Jonah

ver. 5b recalls Ps. v. 8; ver. 6a is formed from Ps. lxi. 2 and xviii. 5; ver. 8a from Ps. cxlii. 4 or cxliii. 4, whilst ver. 8b recalls Ps. xviii. 7 and lxxxviii. 3; ver. 9a is formed after Ps. xxxi. 7; and ver. 10 resembles Ps. xlii. 5 and Ps. i. 14, 23.

<sup>1</sup> The offence taken at the miracles in the book originated with the heathen. Even to Lucian they apparently presented an occasion for ridicule (see *Veræ histor.* lib. i. § 30 sq., ed. Bipont). With regard to the three

records miraculous occurrences ; but even the two most striking miracles, the three days' imprisonment in the belly of the sea-fish, and the growth of a *Qiqāyōn* to a sufficient height to overshadow a sitting man, have analogies in nature, which make the possibility of these miracles at least conceivable (see the comm. on ch. ii. 1 and iv. 6). The repentance of the Ninevites in consequence of the prophet's preaching, although an unusual and extraordinary occurrence, was not a miracle in the strict sense of the word. At the same time, the possibility of this miracle by no means proves its reality or historical truth. This can only be correctly discerned and rightly estimated, from the important bearing of Jonah's mission to Nineveh and of his conduct in relation to this mission upon the position of Israel in the divine plan of salvation in relation to the Gentile world. *The mission of Jonah was a fact of symbolical and typical importance, which was intended not only to enlighten Israel as to the position of the Gentile world in relation to the kingdom of God, but also to typify the future adoption of such of the heathen, as should observe the word of God, into the fellowship of the salvation prepared in Israel for all nations.*

As the time drew nigh when Israel was to be given up into the power of the Gentiles, and trodden down by them, on account of its stiff-necked apostasy from the Lord its God, it was very natural for the self-righteous mind of Israel to regard the Gentiles as simply enemies of the people and kingdom of God, and not only to deny their capacity for salvation, but also to interpret the prophetic announcement of the judgment coming upon

days' imprisonment in the belly of the fish, and on the *Qiqāyōn*, Augustine in his Epist. 102 says, "I have heard this kind of inquiry ridiculed by pagans with great laughter;" and Theophylact also says, "Jonah is therefore swallowed by a whale, and the prophet remains in it three days and the same number of nights; which appears to be beyond the power of the hearers to believe, chiefly of those who come to this history fresh from the schools of the Greeks and their wise teaching." This ridicule first found admission into the Christian church, when the rise of deism, naturalism, and rationalism caused a denial of the miracles and inspiration of the Scriptures to be exalted into an axiom of free inquiry. From this time forward a multitude of marvellous hypotheses and trivial ideas concerning the book of Jonah have been brought out, which P. Friedrichsen has collected and discussed in a most unspiritual manner in his *Kritische Uebersicht der verschiedenen Ansichten von dem Buche Jona*.

the Gentiles as signifying that they were destined to utter destruction. The object of Jonah's mission to Nineveh was to combat in the most energetic manner, and practically to overthrow, a delusion which had a seeming support in the election of Israel to be the vehicle of salvation, and which stimulated the inclination to pharisaical reliance upon an outward connection with the chosen nation and a lineal descent from Abraham. Whereas other prophets proclaimed in words the position of the Gentiles with regard to Israel in the nearer and more remote future, and predicted not only the surrender of Israel to the power of the Gentiles, but also the future conversion of the heathen to the living God, and their reception into the kingdom of God, the prophet Jonah was entrusted with the commission to proclaim the position of Israel in relation to the Gentile world in a symbolico-typical manner, and to exhibit both figuratively and typically not only the susceptibility of the heathen for divine grace, but also the conduct of Israel with regard to the design of God to show favour to the Gentiles, and the consequences of their conduct. The susceptibility of the Gentiles for the salvation revealed in Israel is clearly and visibly depicted in the behaviour of the Gentile sailors, viz. in the fact that they fear the God of heaven and earth, call upon Him, present sacrifice to Him, and make vows; and still more in the deep impression produced by the preaching of Jonah in Nineveh, and the fact that the whole population of the great city, with the king at their head, repent in sackcloth and ashes. The attitude of Israel towards the design of God to show mercy to the Gentiles and grant them salvation, is depicted in the way in which Jonah acts, when he receives the divine command, and when he goes to carry it out. Jonah tries to escape from the command to proclaim the word of God in Nineveh by flight to Tarshish, because he is displeased with the display of divine mercy to the great heathen world, and because, according to ch. iv. 2, he is afraid lest the preaching of repentance should avert from Nineveh the destruction with which it is threatened. In this state of mind on the part of the prophet, there are reflected the feelings and the general state of mind of the Israelitish nation towards the Gentiles. According to his natural man, Jonah shares in this, and is thereby fitted to be the representative of Israel in its pride at its own election. At the same

time, it is only in this state of mind that the old man, which rebels against the divine command, comes sharply out, whereas his better *I* hears the word of God, and is moved within; so that we cannot place him in the category of the false prophets, who prophesy from their own hearts. When the captain wakes him up in the storm upon the sea, and the lot shows that he is guilty, he confesses his fault, and directs the sailors to cast him into the sea, because it is on his account that the great storm has come upon them (ch. i. 10-12). The infliction of this punishment, which falls upon him on account of his obstinate resistance to the will of God, typifies that rejection and banishment from the face of God which Israel will assuredly bring upon itself by its obstinate resistance to the divine call. But Jonah, when cast into the sea, is swallowed up by a great fish; and when he prays to the Lord in the fish's belly, he is vomited upon the land unhurt. This miracle has also a symbolical meaning for Israel. It shows that if the carnal nation, with its ungodly mind, should turn to the Lord even in the last extremity, it will be raised up again by a divine miracle from destruction to newness of life. And lastly, the manner in which God reproves the prophet, when he is angry because Nineveh has been spared (ch. iv.), is intended to set forth as in a mirror before all Israel the greatness of the divine compassion, which embraces all mankind, in order that it may reflect upon it and lay it to heart.

But this by no means exhausts the deeper meaning of the history of Jonah. It extends still further, and culminates in the typical character of Jonah's three days' imprisonment in the belly of the fish, upon which Christ threw some light when He said, "As Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt. xii. 40). The clue to the meaning of this type, *i.e.* to the divinely-appointed connection between the typical occurrence and its antitype, is to be found in the answer which Jesus gave to Philip and Andrew when they told Him, a short time before His death, that there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast who desired to see Jesus. This answer consists of two distinct statements, *viz.* (John xii. 23, 24): "The time is come that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily,



I say unto you, Except the grain of wheat fall into the earth, and die, it abideth alone : but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit;" and (ver. 32), "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." This answer of Jesus intimates that the time to admit the Gentiles has not yet come ; but the words, "the hour is come," etc., also contain the explanation, that "the Gentiles have only to wait patiently a little longer, since their union with Christ, with which the address concludes (ver. 32), is directly connected with the glorification of the Son of man" (Hengstenberg on John xii. 20). This assertion of the Lord, that His death and glorification are necessary in order that He may draw all men, even the heathen, to Himself, or that by His death He may abolish the wall of partition by which the Gentiles were shut out of the kingdom of God, at which He had already hinted in John x. 15, 16, teaches us that the history of Jonah is to be regarded as an important and significant link in the chain of development of the divine plan of salvation. When Assyria was assuming the form of a world-conquering power, and the giving up of Israel into the hands of the Gentiles was about to commence, Jehovah sent His prophet to Nineveh, to preach to this great capital of the imperial kingdom His omnipotence, righteousness, and grace. For although the giving up of Israel was inflicted upon it as a punishment for its idolatry, yet, according to the purpose of God, it was also intended to prepare the way for the spread of the kingdom of God over all nations. The Gentiles were to learn to fear the living God of heaven and earth, not only as a preparation for the deliverance of Israel out of their hands after it had been refined by the punishment, but also that they might themselves be convinced of the worthlessness of their idols, and learn to seek salvation from the God of Israel. But whilst this brings out distinctly to the light the deep inward connection between the mission of Jonah to Nineveh and the divine plan of salvation, the typical character of that connection is first made perfectly clear from what Jonah himself passed through. For whereas the punishment, which he brought upon himself through his resistance to the divine command, contained this lesson, that Israel in its natural nationality must perish in order that out of the old sinful nature there may arise a new people of God, which, being dead to the law, may serve the Lord in the will-

ingness of the spirit, God also appointed the mortal anguish and the deliverance of Jonah as a type of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ to be the Saviour of the whole world. As Jonah the servant of God is given up to death that he may successfully accomplish the work committed to him, namely, to proclaim to the Ninevites the judgment and mercy of the God of heaven and earth; so must the Son of God be buried in the earth like a grain of wheat, that He may bring forth fruit for the whole world. The resemblance between the two is apparent in this. But Jonah deserved the punishment of death; Christ, on the contrary, suffered as the innocent One for the sins of mankind, and went voluntarily to death as One who had life in Himself to accomplish His Father's will. In this difference the inequality appears; and in this the type falls back behind the antitype, and typifies the reality but imperfectly. But even in this difference we may perceive a certain resemblance between Jonah and Christ which must not be overlooked. Jonah died according to his natural man on account of the sin, which was common to himself and his nation; Christ died for the sin of His people, which He had taken upon Himself, to make expiation for it; but He also died as a member of the nation, from which He had sprung according to the flesh, when He was made under the law, that He might rise again as the Saviour of all nations.

This symbolical and typical significance of the mission of the prophet Jonah precludes the assumption that the account in his book is a myth or a parabolical fiction, or simply the description of a symbolical transaction which the prophet experienced in spirit only. And the contents of the book are at variance with all these assumptions, even with the last. When the prophets are commanded to carry out symbolical transactions, they do so without repugnance. But Jonah seeks to avoid executing the command of God by flight, and is punished in consequence. This is at variance with the character of a purely symbolical action, and proves that the book relates historical facts. It is true that the sending of Jonah to Nineveh had not its real purpose within itself; that is to say, that it was not intended to effect the conversion of the Ninevites to the living God, but simply to bring to light the truth that even the Gentiles were capable of receiving divine truth, and to

exhibit the possibility of their eventual reception into the kingdom of God. But this truth could not have been brought to the consciousness of the Israelites in a more impressive manner than by Jonah's really travelling to Nineveh to proclaim the destruction of that city on account of its wickedness, and seeing the proclamation followed by the results recorded in our book. Still less could the importance of this truth, so far as Israel was concerned, be exhibited in a merely symbolical transaction. If the intended flight of the prophet to Tarshish and his misfortune upon the sea were not historical facts, they could only be mythical or parabolical fictions. But though myths may very well embody religious ideas, and parables set forth prophetic truths, they cannot be types of future facts in the history of salvation. If the three days' confinement of Jonah in the belly of the fish really had the typical significance which Christ attributes to it in Matt. xii. 39 sqq. and Luke xi. 29 sqq., it can neither be a myth or dream, nor a parable, nor merely a visionary occurrence experienced by the prophet; but must have had as much objective reality as the facts of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

But if it follows from what has been said, that our book contains facts of a symbolico-typical meaning from the life of the prophet Jonah, there is no tenable ground left for disputing the authorship of the prophet himself. At the same time, the fact that Jonah was the author is not in itself enough to explain the admission of the book among the writings of the minor prophets. This place the book received, not because it related historical events that had happened to the prophet Jonah, but because these events were practical prophecies. Marck saw this, and has the following apt remark upon this point: "The writing is to a great extent historical, but so that in the history itself there is hidden the mystery of a very great prophecy; and he proves himself to be a true

<sup>1</sup> Compare also the critical examination of the more recent views that have been published against the historical character of the book of Jonah, and the negative and positive vindication of the historical view, in Hävernick's *Handbuch der Einleitung in d. A. T.* ii. 2, p. 326 sqq.; and the discussions on the symbolical character of the book by Hengstenberg (*Christology*, vol. i. p. 404 sqq. translation), and K. H. Sack in his *Christliche Apologetik*, p. 343 sqq., ed. 2.

prophet quite as much by his own fate as he does by his prophecies."

For the exegetical literature on the book of Jonah, see my *Lehrbuch der Einleitung*, p. 291.

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## EXPOSITION.

### MISSION OF JONAH TO NINEVEH—HIS FLIGHT AND PUNISHMENT.—CHAP. I.

Jonah tries to avoid fulfilling the command of God, to preach repentance to the great city Nineveh, by a rapid flight to the sea, for the purpose of sailing to Tarshish (vers. 1-3); but a terrible storm, which threatens to destroy the ship, brings his sin to light (vers. 4-10); and when the lot singles him out as the culprit, he confesses that he is guilty; and in accordance with the sentence which he pronounces upon himself, is cast into the sea (vers. 11-16).

Vers. 1-3. The narrative commences with *וַיֵּלֶךְ*, as Ruth (i. 1), 1 Samuel (i. 1), and others do. This was the standing formula with which historical events were linked on to one another, inasmuch as every occurrence follows another in chronological sequence; so that the *Vav* (and) simply attaches to a series of events, which are assumed as well known, and by no means warrants the assumption that the narrative which follows is merely a fragment of a larger work (see at Josh. i. 1). The word of the Lord which came to Jonah was this: "*Arise, go to Nineveh, the great city, and preach against it.*" *בַּיּוֹם* does not stand for *בַּיּוֹם* (ch. iii. 2), but retains its proper meaning, *against*, indicating the threatening nature of the preaching, as the explanatory clause which follows clearly shows. The connection in ch. iii. 2 is a different one. *Nineveh*, the capital of the Assyrian kingdom, and the residence of the great kings of Assyria, which was built by Nimrod according to Gen. x. 11, and by Ninos, the mythical founder of the Assyrian empire, according to the Greek and Roman authors, is repeatedly called "the great city" in this book (ch. iii. 2, 3, iv. 11), and its size

is given as three days' journey (ch. iii. 3). This agrees with the statements of classical writers, according to whom *Nivos*, *Ninus*, as Greeks and Romans call it, was the largest city in the world at that time. According to Strabo (xvi. 1, 3), it was much larger than Babylon, and was situated in a plain, *'Arou-plas*, of Assyria, *i.e.* on the left bank of the Tigris. According to Ctesias (in Diod. ii. 3), its circumference was as much as 480 stadia, *i.e.* twelve geographical miles; whereas, according to Strabo, the circumference of the wall of Babylon was not more than 365 stadia. These statements have been confirmed by modern excavations upon the spot. The conclusion to which recent discoveries lead is, that the name Nineveh was used in two senses: *first*, for one particular city; and *secondly*, for a complex of four large primeval cities (including Nineveh proper), the circumvallation of which is still traceable, and a number of small dwelling-places, castles, etc., the mounds (Tell) of which cover the land. This Nineveh, in the broader sense, is bounded on three sides by rivers—viz. on the north-west by the Khosr, on the west by the Tigris, and on the south-west by the Gazr Su and the Upper or Great Zab—and on the fourth side by mountains, which ascend from the rocky plateau; and it was fortified artificially all round on the river-sides with dams, sluices for inundating the land, and canals, and on the land side with ramparts and castles, as we may still see from the heaps of ruins. It formed a trapezium, the sharp angles of which lay towards the north and south, the long sides being formed by the Tigris and the mountains. The average length is about twenty-five English miles; the average breadth fifteen. The four large cities were situated on the edge of the trapezium, Nineveh proper (including the ruins of Kouyunjik, Nebbi Yunas, and Ninua) being at the north-western corner, by the Tigris; the city, which was evidently the later capital (Nimrud), and which Rawlinson, Jones, and Oppert suppose to have been *Calah*, at the south-western corner, between Tigris and Zab; a third large city, which is now without a name, and has been explored least of all, but within the circumference of which the village of Selamiyeh now stands, on the Tigris itself, from three to six English miles to the north of Nimrud; and lastly, the citadel and temple-mass, which is now named Khorsabad, and is said to be called Dur-Sargina in the inscriptions, from the

palace built there by Sargon, on the Khosr, pretty near to the north-eastern corner (compare M. v. Niebuhr, *Geschichte Assurs*, p. 274 sqq., with the ground-plan of the city of Nineveh, p. 284). But although we may see from this that Nineveh could very justly be called the great city, Jonah does not apply this epithet to it with the intention of pointing out to his countrymen its majestic size, but, as the expression *g'doláh le'lohim* in ch. iii. 3 clearly shows, and as we may see still more clearly from ch. iv. 11, with reference to the importance which Nineveh had, both in the eye of God, and with regard to the divine commission which he had received, as the capital of the Gentile world, *quæ propter tot animarum multitudinem Deo curæ erat* (Michaelis). Jonah was to preach against this great Gentile city, because its wickedness had come before Jehovah, i.e. because the report or the tidings of its great corruption had penetrated to God in heaven (cf. Gen. xviii. 21; 1 Sam. v. 12).—Ver. 3. Jonah sets out upon his journey; not to Nineveh, however, but to flee to *Tarshish*, i.e. *Tartessus*, a Phœnician port in Spain (see at Gen. x. 4 and Isa. xxiii. 1), “*from the face of Jehovah*,” i.e. away from the presence of the Lord, out of the land of Israel, where Jehovah dwelt in the temple, and manifested His presence (cf. Gen. iv. 16); not to hide himself from the omnipresent God, but to withdraw from the service of Jehovah, the God-King of Israel.<sup>1</sup> The motive for this flight was not fear of the difficulty of carrying out the command of God, but, as Jonah himself says in ch. iv. 2, anxiety lest the compassion of God should spare the sinful city in the event of its repenting. He had no wish to co-operate in this; and that not merely because “he knew, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that the repentance of the Gentiles would be the ruin of the Jews, and, as a lover of his country, was actuated not so much by envy of the salvation of Nineveh, as by unwillingness that his own people should perish,” as Jerome supposes, but also because he really grudged salvation

<sup>1</sup> Marck has already correctly observed, that “this must not be understood as flight from the being and knowledge of God, lest we should attribute to the great prophet gross ignorance of the omnipresence and omniscience of God; but as departure from the land of Canaan, the gracious seat of God, outside which he thought, that possibly, at any rate at that time, the gift and office of a prophet would not be conferred upon him.”

to the Gentiles, and feared lest their conversion to the living God should infringe upon the privileges of Israel above the Gentile world, and put an end to its election as the nation of God.<sup>1</sup> He therefore betook himself to *Yāphō*, i.e. Joppa, the port on the Mediterranean Sea (*vid.* comm. on Josh. xix. 46), and there found a ship which was going to Tarshish; and having paid the *s'khārāh*, the hire of the ship, i.e. the fare for the passage, embarked "to go with them (i.e. the sailors) to Tarshish."

Vers. 4-10. Jonah's foolish hope of being able to escape from the Lord was disappointed. "*Jehovah threw a great wind (i.e. a violent wind) upon the sea.*" A mighty tempest (עָרָב, rendered appropriately κλύδων by the LXX.) arose, so that "*the ship thought to be dashed to pieces,*" i.e. to be wrecked (הִשָּׁב used of inanimate things, equivalent to "*was very nearly*" wrecked). In this danger the seamen (*mallāch*, a denom. of *melach*, the salt flood) cried for help, "*every one to his god.*" They were heathen, and probably for the most part Phœnicians, but from different places, and therefore worshippers of different gods. But as the storm did not abate, they also resorted to

<sup>1</sup> Luther has already deduced this, the only true reason, from ch. iv., in his *Commentary on the Prophet Jonah*: "Because Jonah was sorry that God was so kind, he would rather not preach, yea, would rather die, than that the grace of God, which was to be the peculiar privilege of the people of Israel, should be communicated to the Gentiles also, who had neither the word of God, nor the laws of Moses, nor the worship of God, nor prophets, nor anything else, but rather strove against God, and His word, and His people." But in order to guard against a false estimate of the prophet, on account of these "carnal, Jewish thoughts of God," Luther directs attention to the fact that "the apostles also held at first the carnal opinion that the kingdom of Christ was to be an outward one; and even afterwards, when they understood that it was to be a spiritual one, they thought that it was to embrace only the Jews, and therefore 'preached the gospel to the Jews only' (Acts viii.), until God enlightened them by a vision from heaven to Peter (Acts x.), and by the public calling of Paul and Barnabas (Acts xiii.), and by wonders and signs; and it was at last resolved by a general council (Acts xv.), that God would also show mercy to the Gentiles, and that He was the God of the Gentiles also. For it was very hard for the Jews to believe that there were any other people outside Israel who helped to form the people of God, because the sayings of the Scripture stop there and speak of Israel and Abraham's seed; and the word of God, the worship of God, the laws and the holy prophets, were with them alone."

such means of safety as they had at command. They "*threw the wares in the ship into the sea, to procure relief to themselves*" (לְהִלֵּךְ מֵעֲלֵיהֶם as in Ex. xviii. 22 and 1 Kings xii. 10). The suffix refers to the persons, not to the things. By throwing the goods overboard, they hoped to preserve the ship from sinking beneath the swelling waves, and thereby to *lighten*, i.e. diminish for themselves the danger of destruction which was so burdensome to them. "*But Jonah had gone down into the lower room of the ship, and had there fallen fast asleep;*" not, however, just at the time of the greatest danger, but before the wind had risen into a dangerous storm. The sentence is to be rendered as a circumstantial one in the pluperfect. *Yark'thē hass'phīnāh* (analogous to *yark'thē habbayith* in Amos vi. 10) is the innermost part of the vessel, i.e. the lower room of the ship. *S'phīnāh*, which only occurs here, and is used in the place of אֲנִיָּה, is the usual word for a ship in Arabic and Aramæan. *Nirdam*: used for deep sleep, as in Judg. iv. 21. This act of Jonah's is regarded by most commentators as a sign of an evil conscience. Marck supposes that he had lain down to sleep, hoping the better to escape either the dangers of sea and air, or the hand of God; others, that he had thrown himself down in despair, and being utterly exhausted and giving himself up for lost, had fallen asleep; or as Theodoret expresses it, being troubled with the gnawings of conscience and overpowered with mourning, he had sought comfort in sleep and fallen into a deep sleep. Jerome, on the other hand, expresses the idea that the words indicate "security of mind" on the part of the prophet: "he is not disturbed by the storm and the surrounding dangers, but has the same composed mind in the calm, or with shipwreck at hand;" and whilst the rest are calling upon their gods, and casting their things overboard, "he is so calm, and feels so safe with his tranquil mind, that he goes down to the interior of the ship and enjoys a most placid sleep." The truth probably lies between these two views. It was not an evil conscience, or despair occasioned by the threatening danger, which induced him to lie down to sleep; nor was it his fearless composure in the midst of the dangers of the storm, but the careless self-security with which he had embarked on the ship to flee from God, without considering that the hand of God could reach him even on the sea, and punish him for his disobedi-



ence. This security is apparent in his subsequent conduct.—Ver. 6. When the danger was at its height, the *upper-steersman*, or ship's captain (*rabh hachöbhêl*, the chief of the ship's governors; *chöbhêl* with the article is a collective noun, and a *denom.* from *chebbhel*, a ship's cable, hence the one who manages, steers, or guides the ship), wakes him with the words, "*How canst thou sleep soundly? Arise, and call upon thy God; perhaps God (hâ'elôhîm with the article, 'the true God') will think of us, that we may not perish.*" The meaning of חֲשַׁבְתָּ is disputed. As חָשַׁב is used in Jer. v. 28 in the sense of shining (viz. of fat), Calvin and others (last of all, Hitzig) have maintained that the *hithpaël* has the meaning, shown himself shining, *i.e.* bright (propitious); whilst others, including Jerome, prefer the meaning *think again*, which is apparently better supported than the former, not only by the Chaldee, but also by the nouns חֲשַׁבְתָּ (Job xii. 5) and חֲשַׁבְתָּ (Ps. cxlvi. 4). God's thinking of a person involves the idea of active assistance. For the thought itself, compare Ps. xl. 18. The fact that Jonah obeyed this awakening call is passed over as self-evident; and in ver. 7 the narrative proceeds to relate, that as the storm had not abated in the meantime, the sailors, firmly believing that some one in the ship had committed a crime which had excited the anger of God that was manifesting itself in the storm, had recourse to the lot to find out the culprit. בְּאִשֶּׁר לָמִי = בְּשִׁלְמִי (ver. 8), as שֶׁ is the vulgar, and in conversation the usual contraction for אֲשֶׁר: "*on account of whom*" (בְּאִשֶּׁר, in this that = because, or followed by לְ, on account of). הִרְעָה, the misfortune (as in Amos iii. 6),—namely, the storm which is threatening destruction. The lot fell upon Jonah. "The fugitive is taken by lot, not from any virtue in lots themselves, least of all the lots of heathen, but by the will of Him who governs uncertain lots" (Jerome).

When Jonah had been singled out by the lot as the culprit, the sailors called upon him to confess his guilt, asking him at the same time about his country, his occupation, and his parentage. The repetition of the question, on whose account this calamity had befallen them, which is omitted in the LXX. (Vatic.), the *Soncin.* prophets, and Cod. 195 of Kennicott, is found in the margin in Cod. 384, and is regarded by Grimm and Hitzig as a marginal gloss that has crept into the text.

It is not superfluous, however; still less does it occasion any confusion; on the contrary, it is quite in order. The sailors wanted thereby to induce Jonah to confess with his own mouth that he was guilty, now that the lot had fallen upon him, and to disclose his crime (Ros. and others). As an indirect appeal to confess his crime, it prepares the way for the further inquiries as to his occupation, etc. They inquired about his occupation, because it might be a disreputable one, and one which excited the wrath of the gods; also about his parentage, and especially about the land and people from which he sprang, that they might be able to pronounce a safe sentence upon his crime.—Ver. 9. Jonah begins by answering the last question, saying that he was “*a Hebrew*,”—the name by which the Israelites designated themselves in contradistinction to other nations, and by which other nations designated them (see at Gen. xiv. 13, and my *Lehrbuch der Einleitung*, § 9, Anm. 2),—and that he worshipped “*the God of heaven, who created the sea and the dry*” (i.e. the land). יְיָ has been rendered correctly by the LXX. σέβουμαι, *colo, revereor*; and does not mean, “I am afraid of Jehovah, against whom I have sinned” (Abarbanel). By the statement, “I fear,” etc., he had no intention of describing himself as a righteous or innocent man (Hitzig), but simply meant to indicate his relation to God,—namely, that he adored the living God who created the whole earth and, as Creator, governed the world. For he admits directly after, that he has sinned against this God, by telling them, as we may see from ver. 10, of his flight from Jehovah. He had not told them this as soon as he embarked in the ship, as Hitzig supposes, but does so now for the first time when they ask about his people, his country, etc., as we may see most unmistakeably from ver. 10b. In ver. 9 Jonah’s statement is not given completely; but the principal fact, viz. that he was a Hebrew and worshipped Jehovah, is followed immediately by the account of the impression which this acknowledgment made upon the heathen sailors; and the confession of his sin is mentioned afterwards as a supplement, to assign the reason for the great fear which came upon the sailors in consequence. מַה־זָּאת עָשִׂיתָ, *What hast thou done!* is not a question as to the nature of his sin, but an exclamation of horror at his flight from Jehovah, the God of heaven and earth, as the following explanatory

clauses כִּי יִרְעוּ וְנִי clearly show. The great fear which came upon the heathen seamen at this confession of Jonah may be fully explained from the dangerous situation in which they found themselves, since the storm preached the omnipotence of God more powerfully than words could possibly do.

Vers. 11-16. Fearing as they did in the storm the wrath of God on account of Jonah's sin, they now asked what they should do, that the storm might abate, "*for the sea continued to rage.*" שָׁחַק, to set itself, to come to a state of repose; or with מָעַל, to desist from a person. הוֹלֵךְ, as in Gen. viii. 5, etc., expressive of the continuance of an action. With their fear of the Almighty God, whom Jonah worshipped, they did not dare to inflict a punishment upon the prophet, simply according to their own judgment. As a worshipper of Jehovah, he should pronounce his own sentence, or let it be pronounced by his God. Jonah replies in ver. 12, "*Cast me into the sea; for I know that for my sake this great storm is (come) upon you.*" As Jerome says, "He does not refuse, or prevaricate, or deny; but, having made confession concerning his flight, he willingly endures the punishment, desiring to perish, and not let others perish on his account." Jonah confesses that he has deserved to die for his rebellion against God, and that the wrath of God which has manifested itself in the storm can only be appeased by his death. He pronounces this sentence, not by virtue of any prophetic inspiration, but as a believing Israelite who is well acquainted with the severity of the justice of the holy God, both from the law and from the history of his nation.—Ver. 13. But the men (the seamen) do not venture to carry out this sentence at once. They try once more to reach the land and escape from the storm, which is threatening them with destruction, without so serious a sacrifice. יִהְיֶה, lit. they broke through, *sc.* through the waves, to bring (the ship) back to the land, *i.e.* they tried to reach the land by rowing and steering. *Châthar* does not mean to row, still less to twist or turn round (*Hitzig*), but to break through; here to break through the waves, to try to overcome them, to which the *παρεβιάζοντο* of the LXX. points. As they could not accomplish this, however, because the sea continued to rage against them (מָעַר עֲלֵיהֶם, was raging against them), they prayed thus to Jehovah: "*We beseech Thee, let us not* (אִלֵּיָּהּ = אִלֵּיָּהּ) *perish*

for the sake of the soul of this man (*נַפְשׁוֹ*, lit. for the soul, as in 2 Sam. xiv. 7 after Deut. xix. 21), and lay not upon us innocent blood,"—that is to say, not "do not let us destroy an innocent man in the person of this man" (Hitzig), but, according to Deut. xxi. 8, "do not impute his death to us, if we cast him into the sea, as bloodguiltiness deserving death;" "*for Thou, O Jehovah, hast done as it pleased Thee*,"—namely, inasmuch as, by sending the storm and determining the lot, Thou hast so ordained that we must cast him into the sea as guilty, in order to expiate Thy wrath. They offer this prayer, not because they have no true conception of the guilt of Jonah, who is not a murderer or blasphemer, inasmuch as, according to their notions, he is not a sinner deserving death (Hitzig), but because they regard Jonah as a prophet or servant of the Almighty God, upon whom, from fear of his God, they do not venture to lay their hand. "We see, therefore, that although they had never enjoyed the teaching of the law, they had been so taught by nature, that they knew very well that the blood of man was dear to God, and precious in His sight" (Calvin).—Vers. 15, 16. After they had prayed thus, they cast Jonah into the sea, and "*the sea stood still* (ceased) *from its raging*." The sudden cessation of the storm showed that the bad weather had come entirely on Jonah's account, and that the sailors had not shed innocent blood by casting him into the sea. In this sudden change in the weather, the arm of the holy God was so suddenly manifested, that the sailors "*feared Jehovah with great fear, and offered sacrifice to Jehovah*"—not after they landed, but immediately, on board the ship—"and vowed vows," i.e. vowed that they would offer Him still further sacrifices on their safe arrival at their destination.

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JONAH'S DELIVERANCE.—CHAP. I. 17—II. 10 (HEB. CHAP. II.).

When Jonah had been cast into the sea by the appointment of God, he was swallowed up by a great fish (ch. i. 17), in whose belly he spent three days and nights, and offered an earnest prayer to God (ch. ii. 1–9); whereupon, by command of Jehovah, the fish vomited him out upon the land (ver. 10).

it also shows itself to be an original reproduction of the expression מַצְרָה לִי, which expresses the prophet's situation in a more pointed manner than בַּצְרָה לִי in Ps. xviii. and בַּצְרָתָה לִי in Ps. cxx. The distress is still more minutely defined in the second hemistich by the expression מִבֶּטֶן שְׂאֹל, "out of the womb of the nether world." As a throat or swallow is ascribed to *sh'ol* in Isa. v. 14, so here it is spoken of as having a בֶּטֶן, or belly. This is not to be taken as referring to the belly of the shark, as Jerome supposes. The expression is a poetical figure used to denote the danger of death, from which there is apparently no escape; like the encompassing with snares of death in Ps. xviii. 5, and the bringing up of the soul out of sheol in Ps. xxx. 3. In the last clause the words pass over very appropriately into an address to Jehovah, which is brought out into still greater prominence by the omission of the copula *Vav*.

Ver. 3. *Thou castedst me into the deep, into the heart of the seas,*

*And the stream surrounded me;*

*All Thy billows and Thy waves went over me.*

4. *Then I said, I am thrust away from Thine eyes,  
Yet I will look again to Thy holy temple.*

The more minute description of the peril of death is attached by *Vav consec.*, to express not sequence in time, but sequence of thought. *Jehovah* cast him into the depth of the sea, because the seamen were merely the executors of the punishment inflicted upon him by *Jehovah*. *M'tsuláh*, the deep, is defined by "the heart of the seas" as the deepest abyss of the ocean. The plural *yammim* (seas) is used here with distinct significance, instead of the singular, "into the heart of the sea" (*yám*) in Ex. xv. 8, to express the idea of the boundless ocean (see Dietrich, *Abhandlung zur hebr. Grammatik*, pp. 16, 17). The next clauses are circumstantial clauses, and mean, so that the current of the sea surrounded me, and all the billows and waves of the sea, which *Jehovah* had raised into a storm, went over me. *Náhâr*, a river or stream, is the streaming or current of the sea, as in Ps. xxiv. 2. The words of the second hemistich are a reminiscence of Ps. xlii. 8. What the Korahite singer of that psalm had experienced spiritually, viz. that one wave of

trouble after another swept over him, that had the prophet literally experienced. Jonah "does not say, The waves and the billows of the sea went over me; but *Thy* waves and *Thy* billows, because he felt in his conscience that the sea with its waves and billows was the servant of God and of His wrath, to punish sin" (Luther). Ver. 4 contains the apodosis to ver. 3a: "When Thou castedst me into the deep, then I said (*sc.* in my heart, *i.e.* then I thought) that I was banished from the sphere of Thine eyes, *i.e.* of Thy protection and care." These words are formed from a reminiscence of Ps. xxxi. 23, נִגְרַשְׁתִּי being substituted for the נִגְרַשְׁתִּי of the psalm. The second hemistich is attached adversatively. אֲנִי, which there is no necessity to alter into אֲנִי = אֲנִי, as Hitzig supposes, introduces the antithesis in an energetic manner, like אֲנִי elsewhere, in the sense of nevertheless, as in Isa. xiv. 15, Ps. xlix. 16, Job xiii. 15 (cf. Ewald, § 354, a). The thought that it is all over with him is met by the confidence of faith that he will still look to the holy temple of the Lord, that is to say, will once more approach the presence of the Lord, to worship before Him in His temple,—an assurance which recalls Ps. v. 8.

The thought that by the grace of the Lord he has been once more miraculously delivered out of the gates of death, and brought to the light of the world, is carried out still further in the following strophe, in entirely new turns of thought.

Ver. 5. *Waters surrounded me even to the soul: the flood encompassed me,*

*Sea-grass was wound round my head.*

6. *I went down to the foundations of the mountains;*

*The earth, its bolts were behind me for ever:*

*Then raisedst Thou my life out of the pit, O Jehovah my God.*

7. *When my soul fainted within me, I thought of Jehovah;*

*And my prayer came to Thee into Thy holy temple.*

This strophe opens, like the last, with a description of the peril of death, to set forth still more perfectly the thought of miraculous deliverance which filled the prophet's mind. The first clause of the fifth verse recalls to mind Ps. xviii. 5 and lxix. 2; the words "the waters pressed (אָנְפוּ) even to the soul" (Ps. lxix. 2) being simply strengthened by אֲנִי אָנְפוּ after Ps. xviii. 5.

The waters of the sea girt him round about, reaching even to the soul, so that it appeared to be all over with his life. *T'hôm*, the unfathomable flood of the ocean, surrounded him. *Sûph*, sedge, i.e. sea-grass, which grows at the bottom of the sea, was bound about his head; so that he had sunk to the very bottom. This thought is expressed still more distinctly in ver. 6a. קְצֵי הָהָרִים, "the ends of the mountains" (from *qâtsabh*, to cut off, that which is cut off, then the place where anything is cut off), are their foundations and roots, which lie in the depths of the earth, reaching even to the foundation of the sea (cf. Ps. xviii. 16). When he sank into the deep, the earth shut its bolts behind him (הָאָרֶץ is placed at the head absolutely). The figure of bolts of the earth that were shut behind Jonah, which we only meet with here (בָּעֶר from the phrase הִקְלַת בָּעֶר, to shut the door behind a person: Gen. vii. 16; 2 Kings iv. 4, 5, 33; Isa. xxvi. 20), has an analogy in the idea which occurs in Job xxxviii. 10, of bolts and doors of the ocean. The bolts of the sea are the walls of the sea-basin, which set bounds to the sea, that it cannot pass over. Consequently the bolts of the earth can only be such barriers as restrain the land from spreading over the sea. These barriers are the weight and force of the waves, which prevent the land from encroaching on the sea. This weight of the waves, or of the great masses of water, which pressed upon Jonah when he had sunk to the bottom of the sea, shut or bolted against him the way back to the earth (the land), just as the bolts that are drawn before the door of a house fasten up the entrance into it; so that the reference is neither to "the rocks jutting out above the water, which prevented any one from ascending from the sea to the land," nor "*densissima terræ compages, qua abyssus tecta Jonam in hac constitutum occludebat*" (Marck). Out of this grave the Lord "brought up his life." *Shachath* is rendered φθορά, *corruptio*, by the early translators (LXX., Chald., Syr., Vulg.); and this rendering, which many of the more modern translators entirely reject, is unquestionably the correct one in Job xvii. 14, where the meaning "pit" is quite unsuitable. But it is by no means warranted in the present instance. The similarity of thought to Ps. xxx. 4 points rather to the meaning pit = cavern or grave, as in Ps. xxx. 10, where *shachath* is used interchangeably with בּוֹר and שְׁאוֹל in ver. 4 as being perfectly synonymous. Ver. 7a

is formed after Ps. cxlii. 4 or cxliii. 4, except that נִפְשִׁי is used instead of רִחִי, because Jonah is not speaking of the covering of the spirit with faintness, but of the plunging of the life into night and the darkness of death by drowning in the water. הִתְעַפָּה, lit. to veil or cover one's self, hence to sink into night and faintness, to pine away. עָלַי, upon or in me, inasmuch as the I, as a person, embraces the soul or life (cf. Ps. xlii. 5). When his soul was about to sink into the night of death, he thought of Jehovah in prayer, and his prayer reached to God in His holy temple, where Jehovah is enthroned as God and King of His people (Ps. xviii. 7, lxxxviii. 3).

But when prayer reaches to God, then He helps and also saves. This awakens confidence in the Lord, and impels to praise and thanksgiving. These thoughts form the last strophe, with which the Psalm of thanksgiving is appropriately closed.

Ver. 8. *They who hold to false vanities*

*Forsake their own mercy.*

9. *But I will sacrifice to Thee with the call of thanksgiving.*

*I will pay what I have vowed.*

*Salvation is with Jehovah.*

In order to express the thought emphatically, that salvation and deliverance are only to be hoped for from Jehovah the living God, Jonah points to the idolaters, who forfeit their mercy. הַבְּלִישָׁה מִשְׁפָּרִים הַבְּלִישָׁה is a reminiscence of Ps. xxxi. 7. הַבְּלִישָׁה, worthless vanities, are all things which man makes into idols or objects of trust. הַבְּלִים are, according to Deut. xxxii. 21, false gods or idols. *Shâmar*, to keep, or, when applied to false gods, to keep to them or reverence them; in Hos. iv. 10 it is also applied to Jehovah. חַסְדִּים signifies neither *pietatem suam* nor *gratiam a Deo ipsis exhibitam*, nor "all the grace and love which they might receive" (Hitzig); but refers to God Himself, as He whose government is pure grace (*vid.* Gen. xxiv. 27), and might become the grace even of the idolatrous. Jonah, on the contrary, like all the righteous, would sacrifice to the Lord *b'qol todâh*, "with the voice, or cry, of thanksgiving," *i.e.* would offer his sacrifices with a prayer of sincere thanksgiving (cf. Ps. xlii. 5), and pay the vow which he had made in his distress (cf. Ps. l. 14, 23). These utterances are founded upon the hope that his deliverance will be effected (Hitzig); and this



hope is based upon the fact that "salvation is Jehovah's," *i.e.* is in His power, so that He only can grant salvation.

Ver. 10. "*Then Jehovah spake to the fish, and it vomited Jonah upon the dry land.*" The nature of God's speaking, or commanding, may be inferred from the words וַיִּקַּח יְהוָה. Cyril explains the thought correctly thus: "The whale is again impelled by a certain divine and secret power of God, being moved to that which seems good to Him." The land upon which Jonah was vomited was, of course, the coast of Palestine, probably the country near Joppa. According to ver. 1, this took place on the third day after he had been swallowed by the fish. On the propheticotypical character of the miracle, see the remarks at p. 385 sqq.

#### JONAH'S PREACHING IN NINEVEH.—CHAP. III.

After Jonah had been punished for his disobedience, and miraculously delivered from death by the mercy of God, he obeyed the renewed command of Jehovah, and preached to the city of Nineveh that it would be destroyed within forty days on account of its sins (vers. 1-4). But the Ninevites believed in God, and repented in sackcloth and ashes, to avert the threatened destruction (vers. 5-9); and the Lord spared the city (ver. 10).

Vers. 1-4. The word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, to go to Nineveh and proclaim to that city what Jehovah would say to him. קְרִיאָה: that which is called out, the proclamation, τὸ κήρυγμα (LXX.). Jonah now obeyed the word of Jehovah. But Nineveh was *a great city to God* (*l'lohim*), *i.e.* it was regarded by God as a great city. This remark points to the motive for sparing it (cf. ch. iv. 11), in case its inhabitants hearkened to the word of God. Its greatness amounted to "a three days' walk." This is usually supposed to refer to the circumference of the city, by which the size of a city is generally determined. But the statement in ver. 4, that "Jonah began to enter into the city the walk of a day," *i.e.* a day's journey, is apparently at variance with this. Hence Hitzig has come to the conclusion that the diameter or

length of the city is intended, and that, as the walk of a day in ver. 4 evidently points to the walk of three days in ver. 3, the latter must also be understood as referring to the length of Nineveh. But according to Diod. ii. 3 the length of the city was 150 stadia, and Herodotus (v. 53) gives just this number of stadia as a day's journey. Hence Jonah would not have commenced his preaching till he had reached the opposite end of the city. This line of argument, the intention of which is to prove the absurdity of the narrative, is based upon the perfectly arbitrary assumption that Jonah went through the entire length of the city in a straight line, which is neither probable in itself, nor implied in בוא בָּעִיר. This simply means to enter, or go into the city, and says nothing about the direction of the course he took within the city. But in a city, the diameter of which was 150 stadia, and the circumference 480 stadia, one might easily walk for a whole day without reaching the other end, by winding about from one street into another. And Jonah would have to do this to find a suitable place for his preaching, since we are not warranted in assuming that it lay exactly in the geographical centre, or at the end of the street which led from the gate into the city. But if Jonah wandered about in different directions, as Theodoret says, "not going straight through the city, but strolling through market-places, streets, etc.," the distance of a day's journey over which he travelled must not be understood as relating to the diameter or length of the city; so that the objection to the general opinion, that the three days' journey given as the size of the city refers to the circumference, entirely falls to the ground. Moreover, Hitzig has quite overlooked the word יָחַל in his argument. The text does not affirm that Jonah went a day's journey into the city, but that he "began to go into the city a day's journey, and cried out." These words do not affirm that he did not begin to preach till after he had gone a whole day's journey, but simply that he had commenced his day's journey in the city when he found a suitable place and a fitting opportunity for his proclamation. They leave the distance that he had really gone, when he began his preaching, quite indefinite; and by no means necessitate the assumption that he only began to preach in the evening, after his day's journey was ended. All that they distinctly affirm is, that he did not preach directly he

entered the city, but only after he had commenced a day's journey, that is to say, had gone some distance into the city. And this is in perfect harmony with all that we know about the size of Nineveh at that time. The circumference of the great city Nineveh, or the length of the boundaries of the city of Nineveh in the broadest sense, was, as Niebuhr says (p. 277), "nearly ninety English miles, not reckoning the smaller windings of the boundary; and this would be just three days' travelling for a good walker on a long journey." "Jonah," he continues, "begins to go a day's journey into the city, then preaches, and the preaching reaches the ears of the king (cf. ver. 6). He therefore came very near to the citadel as he went along on his first day's journey. At that time the citadel was probably in Nimrud (*Calah*). Jonah, who would hardly have travelled through the desert, went by what is now the ordinary caravan road past Amida, and therefore entered the city at Nineveh. And it was on the road from Nineveh to Calah, not far off the city, possibly in the city itself, that he preached. Now the distance between Calah and Nineveh (not reckoning either city), measured in a straight line upon the map, is  $18\frac{1}{2}$  English miles." If, then, we add to this, (1) that the road from Nineveh to Calah or Nimrud hardly ran in a perfectly straight line, and therefore would be really longer than the exact distance between the two parts of the city according to the map, and (2) that Jonah had first of all to go through Nineveh, and possibly into Calah, he may very well have walked twenty English miles, or a short day's journey, before he preached. The main point of his preaching is all that is given, viz. the threat that Nineveh should be destroyed, which was the point of chief importance, so far as the object of the book was concerned, and which Jonah of course explained by denouncing the sins and vices of the city. The threat ran thus: "Yet forty days, and Nineveh will be destroyed." וְעִירָא נִינְוֵה תִפְּלוּת, lit. overturned, i.e. destroyed from the very foundations, is the word applied to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The respite granted is fixed at forty days, according to the number which, even as early as the flood, was taken as the measure for determining the delaying of visitations of God.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The LXX., however, has *τρεῖς ἡμέρας*, probably from a peculiar and arbitrary combination, and not merely from an early error of the pen. The

Vers. 5-9. The Ninevites believed in God, since they hearkened to the preaching of the prophet sent to them by God, and humbled themselves before God with repentance. They proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth (penitential garments: see at Joel i. 13, 14; 1 Kings xxi. 27, etc.), "*from their great one even to their small one*," i.e. both old and young, all without exception. Even the king, when the matter (*had-dābhār*) came to his knowledge, i.e. when he was informed of Jonah's coming, and of his threatening prediction, descended from his throne, laid aside his royal robe (*'addereth*, see at Josh. vii. 21), wrapt himself in a sackcloth, and sat down in ashes, as a sign of the deepest mourning (compare Job ii. 8), and by a royal edict appointed a general fast for man and beast. וַיִּצְוֶה, he caused to be proclaimed. וַיֹּאמֶר, and said, viz. through his heralds. בְּמִצְוַת מֶלֶךְ, *ex decreto*, by command of the king and his great men, i.e. his ministers (בְּמִצְוַת מַלְאָכָיו, Dan. iii. 10, 29, a technical term for the edicts of the Assyrian and Babylonian kings). "Man and beast (viz. oxen and sheep) are to taste nothing; they are not to pasture (the cattle are not to be driven to the pasture), and are to drink no water." לֹא, for which we should expect לֹא יִשְׁתּוּ, may be explained from the fact that the command is communicated directly. Moreover, man and beast are to be covered with mourning clothes, and cry to God *b'chozqāh*, i.e. strongly, mightily, and to turn every one from his evil ways: so "*will God perhaps* (יִפְתָּע יְיָ) *turn and repent* (*yāshūbh v'nicham*, as in Joel ii. 14), and desist from the fierceness of His anger (cf. Ex. xxxii. 12), that we perish not." This verse (ver. 9) also belongs to the king's edict. The powerful impression made upon the Ninevites by Jonah's preaching, so that the whole city repented in sackcloth and ashes, is quite intelligible, if we simply bear in mind the great susceptibility of Oriental races to emotion, the awe of one Supreme Being which is peculiar to all the heathen religions of Asia, and the great esteem in which soothsaying and oracles were held in Assyria from the very earliest times (*vid.* Cicero, *de divinat.* i. 1); and if we also take into calculation the circumstance that the appearance of a foreigner, who, without any conceivable personal interest, and with the most fearless other Greek translators (Aquil., Symm., and Theodot.) had, according to Theodoret, the number *forty*; and so also had the Syriac.

boldness, disclosed to the great royal city its godless ways, and announced its destruction within a very short period with the confidence so characteristic of the God-sent prophets, could not fail to make a powerful impression upon the minds of the people, which would be all the stronger if the report of the miraculous working of the prophets of Israel had penetrated to Nineveh. There is just as little to surprise us in the circumstance that the signs of mourning among the Ninevites resemble in most respects the forms of penitential mourning current among the Israelites, since these outward signs of mourning are for the most part the common human expressions of deep sorrow of heart, and are found in the same or similar forms among all the nations of antiquity (see the numerous proofs of this which are collected in Winer's *Real-wörterbuch*, art. *Trauer*; and in Herzog's *Cyclopædia*). Ezekiel (xxvi. 16) depicts the mourning of the Tyrian princes over the ruin of their capital in just the same manner in which that of the king of Nineveh is described here in ver. 6, except that, instead of sackcloth, he mentions trembling as that with which they wrap themselves round. The garment of haircloth (*sag*) worn as mourning costume reaches as far back as the patriarchal age (cf. Gen. xxxvii. 34; Job xvi. 15). Even the one feature which is peculiar to the mourning of Nineveh—namely, that the cattle also have to take part in the mourning—is attested by Herodotus (ix. 24) as an Asiatic custom.<sup>1</sup> This custom originated in the idea that there is a biotic *rapprochement* between man and the larger domestic animals, such as oxen, sheep, and goats, which are his living property. It is only to these animals that there is any reference here, and not to "horses, asses, and camels, which were decorated at other times with

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus relates that the Persians, when mourning for their general, Masistios, who had fallen in the battle at Platea, shaved off the hair from their horses, and adds, "Thus did the barbarians, in their way, mourn for the deceased Masistios." Plutarch relates the same thing (Aristid. 14 fin. Compare Brissonius, *de regno Pers. princip.* ii. p. 206; and Periz. *ad Æliani Var. hist.* vii. 8). The objection made to this by Hitzig—namely, that the mourning of the cattle in our book is not analogous to the case recorded by Herodotus, because the former was an expression of repentance—has no force whatever, for the simple reason that in all nations the outward signs of penitential mourning are the same as those of mourning for the dead.

costly coverings," as Marck, Rosenmüller, and others erroneously assume. Moreover, this was not done "with the intention of impelling the men to shed hotter tears through the lowing and groaning of the cattle" (Theodoret); or "to set before them as in a mirror, through the sufferings of the innocent brutes, their own great guilt" (Chald.); but it was a manifestation of the thought, that just as the animals which live with man are drawn into fellowship with his sin, so their sufferings might also help to appease the wrath of God. And although this thought might not be free from superstition, there lay at the foundation of it this deep truth, that the irrational creature is made subject to vanity on account of man's sin, and sighs along with man for liberation from the bondage of corruption (Rom. viii. 19 sqq.). We cannot therefore take the words "cry mightily unto God" as referring only to the men, as many commentators have done, in opposition to the context; but must regard "man and beast" as the subject of this clause also, since the thought that even the beasts cry to or call upon God in distress has its scriptural warrant in Joel i. 20.

Ver. 10. But however deep the penitential mourning of Nineveh might be, and however sincere the repentance of the people, when they acted according to the king's command; the repentance was not a lasting one, or permanent in its effects. Nor did it evince a thorough conversion to God, but was merely a powerful incitement to conversion, a waking up out of the careless security of their life of sin, an endeavour to forsake their evil ways which did not last very long. The statement in ver. 10, that "God saw their doing, that they turned from their evil ways; and He repented of the evil that He had said that He would do to them, and did it not" (cf. Ex. xxxii. 14), can be reconciled with this without difficulty. The repentance of the Ninevites, even if it did not last, showed, at any rate, a susceptibility on the part of the heathen for the word of God, and their willingness to turn and forsake their evil and ungodly ways; so that God, according to His compassion, could extend His grace to them in consequence. God always acts in this way. He not only forgives the converted man, who lays aside his sin, and walks in newness of life; but He has mercy also upon the penitent who confesses and mourns over his sin, and is willing to amend. The Lord also directed Jonah to preach

repentance to Nineveh; not that this capital of the heathen world might be converted at once to faith in the living God, and its inhabitants be received into the covenant of grace which He had made with Israel, but simply to give His people Israel a practical proof that He was the God of the heathen also, and could prepare for Himself even among them a people of His possession. Moreover, the readiness, with which the Ninevites hearkened to the word of God that was proclaimed to them and repented, showed that with all the depth to which they were sunken in idolatry and vice they were at that time not yet ripe for the judgment of extermination. The punishment was therefore deferred by the long-suffering of God, until this great heathen city, in its further development into a God-opposing imperial power, seeking to subjugate all nations, and make itself the mistress of the earth, had filled up the measure of its sins, and had become ripe for that destruction which the prophet Nahum predicted, and the Median king Cyaxares inflicted upon it in alliance with Nabopolassar of Babylonia.

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#### JONAH'S DISCONTENT AND CORRECTION.—CHAP. IV.

Vers. 1-5. Jonah, provoked at the sparing of Nineveh, prayed in his displeasure to Jehovah to take his soul from him, as his proclamation had not been fulfilled (vers. 1-3). *יָרַע אֵלַי*, *it was evil for Jonah, i.e. it vexed, irritated him*, not merely it displeased him, for which *יָרַע בְּעֵינַי* is generally used. The construction with *אֵלַי* resembles that with *לִי* in Neh. ii. 10, xiii. 8. *רָעָה נְדוּלָה*, "a great evil," serves simply to strengthen the idea of *יָרַע*. The great vexation grew even to anger (*יָרַע לוֹ*; cf. Gen. xxx. 2, etc.). The fact that the predicted destruction of Nineveh had not taken place excited his discontent and wrath. And he tried to quarrel with God, by praying to Jehovah.<sup>1</sup> "*Alas* (*אָחַז* as in ch. i. 14), *Jehovah, was not this my word (i.e. did I*

<sup>1</sup> Calvin observes upon this: "He prayed in a tumult, as if reproving God. We must necessarily recognise a certain amount of piety in this prayer of Jonah, and at the same time many faults. There was so far piety in it, that he directed his complaints to God. For hypocrites, even when they address God, are nevertheless hostile to Him. But Jonah,

not say so to myself) *when I was still in my land* (in Palestine)?" What his word or his thought then was, he does not say; but it is evident from what follows: viz. that Jehovah would not destroy Nineveh, if its inhabitants repented. 'Al-kên, therefore, *sc.* because this was my saying. יִרְחֹק, *προέφθασα*, *I prevented to flee to Tarshish, i.e.* I endeavoured, by a flight to Tarshish, to prevent, *sc.* what has now taken place, namely, that Thou dost not fulfil Thy word concerning Nineveh, *because I know that Thou art a God gracious and merciful*, etc. (compare Ex. xxxiv. 6 and xxxii. 14, as in Joel ii. 13). The prayer which follows, "*Take my life from me*," calls to mind the similar prayer of Elijah in 1 Kings xix. 4; but the motive assigned is a different one. Whilst Elijah adds, "for I am not better than my fathers," Jonah adds, "*for death is better to me than life*." This difference must be distinctly noticed, as it brings out the difference in the state of mind of the two prophets. In the inward conflict that had come upon Elijah he wished for death, because he did not see the expected result of his zeal for the Lord of Sabaoth; in other words, it was from spiritual despair, caused by the apparent failure of his labours. Jonah, on the other hand, did not wish to live any longer, because God had not carried out His threat against Nineveh. His weariness of life arose, not like Elijah's from stormy zeal for the honour of God and His kingdom, but from vexation at the non-fulfilment of his prophecy. This vexation was not occasioned, however, by offended dignity, or by anxiety or fear lest men should regard him as a liar or babbler (*ψευδο-επής τε καὶ βωμολόχος*, Cyr. Al.; *ψεύστης*, Theodoret; *vanus et mendax*, Calvin and others); nor was he angry, as Calvin supposes, because he associated his office with the honour of God, and was unwilling that the name of God should be exposed to the scoffing of the heathen, *quasi de nihilo terreret*, or "because he saw that it would furnish material for impious blasphemies if God changed His purpose, or if He did not abide by His word;" but, as Luther observes (in his remarks on Jonah's flight), "he was hostile to the city of Nineveh, and

when he complains, although he does not keep within proper bounds, but is carried away by a blind and vicious impulse, is nevertheless prepared to submit himself to God, as we shall presently see. This is the reason why he is said to have prayed."



still held a Jewish and carnal view of God" (for the further development of this view, see the remarks above, at p. 392). That this was really Jonah's view, is proved by Luther from the fact that God reproves his displeasure and anger in these words, "Should I not spare Nineveh?" etc. (ver. 11). "He hereby implies that Jonah was displeased at the fact that God had spared the city, and was angry because He had not destroyed it as he had preached, and would gladly have seen." Offended vanity or unintelligent zeal for the honour of God would have been reproved by God in different terms from those in which Jonah was actually reproved, according to the next verse (ver. 4), where Jehovah asks the prophet, "*Is thine anger justly kindled?*" הֲיֵאֱכָב is adverbial, as in Deut. ix. 21, xiii. 15, etc., *bene, probe, recte, δικαίως* (Symm.).

Then Jonah went out of Nineveh, sat down on the east of the city, where Nineveh was bounded by the mountains, from which he could overlook the city, made himself a hut there, and sat under it in the shade, till he saw what would become of the city, *i.e.* what fate would befall it (ver. 5). This verse is regarded by many commentators as a supplementary remark, וַיֵּצֵא, with the verbs which follow, being rendered in the pluperfect: "Jonah had gone out of the city," etc. We grant that this is grammatically admissible, but it cannot be shown to be necessary, and is indeed highly improbable. If, for instance, Jonah went out of Nineveh before the expiration of the forty days, to wait for the fulfilment of his prophecy, in a hut to the east of the city, he could not have been angry at its non-fulfilment before the time arrived, nor could God have reproved him for his anger before that time. The divine correction of the dissatisfied prophet, which is related in vers. 6–11, cannot have taken place till the forty days had expired. But this correction is so closely connected with Jonah's departure from the city and settlement to the east of it, to wait for the final decision as to its fate (ver. 5), that we cannot possibly separate it, so as to take the verbs in ver. 5 as pluperfects, or those in vers. 6–11 as historical imperfects. There is no valid ground for so forced an assumption as this. As the expression וַיֵּרָא אֶל יוֹנָה in ch. iv. 1, which is appended to וַיֵּצֵא in ch. iii. 10, shows that Jonah did not become irritated and angry till after God had failed to carry out His threat concerning Nineveh, and

that it was then that he poured out his discontent in a reproachful prayer to God (ver. 2), there is nothing whatever to force us to the assumption that Jonah had left Nineveh before the fortieth day.<sup>1</sup> Jonah had no reason to be afraid of perishing with the city. If he had faith, which we cannot deny, he could rely upon it that God would not order him, His own servant, to perish with the ungodly, but when the proper time arrived, would direct him to leave the city. But when forty days elapsed, and nothing occurred to indicate the immediate or speedy fall of the city, and he was reproved by God for his anger on that account in these words, "Art thou rightly or justly angry?" the answer from God determined him to leave the city and wait outside, in front of it, to see what fate would befall it. For since this answer still left it open, as a possible thing, that the judgment might burst upon the city, Jonah interpreted it in harmony with his own inclination, as signifying that the judgment was only postponed, not removed, and therefore resolved to wait in a hut outside the city, and watch for the issue of the whole affair.<sup>2</sup> But his hope was disappointed, and his remaining there became, quite contrary to his intention, an occasion for completing his correction.

Vers. 6-11. Jehovah-God appointed a *Qiqayon*, which grew up over Jonah, to give him shade over his head, "*to deliver him from his evil.*" The *Qiqayon*, which Luther renders gourd (*Kürbiss*) after the LXX., but describes in his commentary on the book of Jonah as the *vitis alba*, is, according to Jerome, the shrub called *Elkeroa* in Syriac, a very common shrub in Pales-

<sup>1</sup> There is no hold in the narrative for Marck's conjecture, that God had already communicated to him His resolution not to destroy Nineveh, because of the repentance of the people, and that this was the reason for his anger.

<sup>2</sup> Theod. Mops. correctly observes, that "when he reflected upon the greatness of the threat, he imagined that something might possibly occur after all." And Calvin better still, that "although forty days had passed, Jonah stood as if fastened to the spot, because he could not yet believe that what he had proclaimed according to the command of God would fail to be effected. . . . This was the cause, therefore, of his still remaining, viz. because he thought, that although the punishment from God had been suspended, yet his preaching had surely not been in vain, but the destruction of the city would take place. This was the reason for his waiting on after the time fixed, as though the result were still doubtful."

tine, which grows in sandy places, having broad leaves that throw a pleasant shadow, and which shoots up to a considerable height in a very few days.<sup>1</sup> The *Elkeroa*, however, which Niebuhr also saw at Basra (*Beschreib. v. Arab.* p. 148) and describes in a similar manner, is the *ricinus* or *palma Christi*, the miraculous tree; and, according to Kimchi and the Talmudists, it was the *Kik* or *Kiki* of the Egyptians, from which an oil was obtained according to Herodotus (ii. 94) and Pliny (*Hist. n.* xv. 7), as was the case according to Niebuhr with the *Elkeroa*. Its rapid growth is also mentioned by Pliny, who calls it *ricinus* (see *Ges. thes.* p. 1214). God caused this shrub to grow up with miraculous rapidity, to such a height that it cast a shade upon Jonah's head, to procure him deliverance (לְהַצִּיל) "from his evil," i.e. not from the burning heat of the sun (*ab æstu solis*), from which he suffered in the hut which he had run up so hastily with twigs, but from his displeasure or vexation, the evil from which he suffered according to ver. 3 (Rosenmüller, Hitzig). The variation in the names of the Deity in vers. 6-9 is worthy of notice. The creation of the miraculous tree to give shade to Jonah is ascribed to *Jehovah-Elohim* in ver. 6. This composite name, which occurs very rarely except in Gen. ii. and iii. (see comm. on Gen. ii. 4), is chosen here to help the transition from *Jehovah* in ver. 4 to *Elohim* in vers. 7, 8. *Jehovah*, who replies to the prophet concerning his discontented complaint (ver. 4) as *Elohim*, i.e. as the divine creative power, causes the miraculous tree to spring up, to heal Jonah of his chagrin. And to the same end *hâ-Elohim*, i.e. the personal God, prepares the worm which punctures the miraculous tree and causes it to wither away (ver. 7); and this is also helped by the east wind appointed by *Elohim*, i.e. the Deity ruling over nature (ver. 8), to bring about the correction of the prophet, who was murmuring against God. Hence the different names of God are employed with thoughtful deliberation. Jonah rejoiced exceedingly at the miraculous growth of the shrub which pro-

<sup>1</sup> Jerome describes it thus: "A kind of bush or shrub, having broad leaves like vine leaves, casting a very dense shadow, and sustaining itself by its trunk, which grows very abundantly in Palestine, and chiefly in sandy places. If placed in sowing land, being quickly nourished, it grows up into a tree, and in a very few days what you saw as nothing but a herb you now look upon as a small tree."

vided shade for him, because he probably saw therein a sign of the goodness of God and of the divine approval of his intention to wait for the destruction of Nineveh. But this joy was not to last long.—Ver. 8. On the rising of the dawn of the very next day, God appointed a worm, which punctured the miraculous tree so that it withered away; and when the sun arose He also appointed a sultry east wind, and the sun smote upon Jonah's head, so that he fainted away. *Chārishith*, from *chārash*, to be silent or quiet, is to be taken when used of the wind in the sense of sultry, as in the Chaldee (LXX. *συχάλων*). The meaning *ventus, qualis flat tempore arandi*, derived from *chārish*, the ploughing (Abulw.), or autumnal east wind (Hitzig), is far less suitable. When Jonah fainted away in consequence of the sun-stroke (for *hith'alleph*, see at Amos viii. 13), he wished himself dead, since death was better for him than life (see ver. 3). יִשְׁאַל אֶת-נַפְשׁוֹ לָמוּת, as in 1 Kings xix. 4, “he wished that his soul might die,” a kind of accusative with the infinitive (cf. Ewald, § 336, b). But God answered, as in ver. 4, by asking whether he was justly angry. Instead of Jehovah (ver. 4) we have *Elohim* mentioned here, and *Jehovah* is not introduced as speaking till ver. 9. We have here an intimation, that just as Jonah's wish to die was simply an expression of the feelings of his mind, so the admonitory word of God was simply a divine voice within him setting itself against his murmuring. It was not till he had persisted in his ill-will, even after this divine admonition within, that Jehovah pointed out to him how wrong his murmuring was. Jehovah's speaking in ver. 9 is a manifestation of the divine will by supernatural inspiration. Jehovah directs Jonah's attention to the contradiction into which he has fallen, by feeling compassion for the withering of the miraculous tree, and at the same time murmuring because God has had compassion upon Nineveh with its many thousands of living beings, and has spared the city for the sake of these souls, many of whom have no idea whatever of right or wrong. *Chastá*: “Thou hast pitied the Qiqayon, at which thou hast not laboured, and which thou hast not caused to grow; for (אֲשֶׁר בֵּן = שֶׁבֶן) son of a night”—i.e. in a night, or over night—“has it grown, and over night perished, and I should not pity Nineveh?” וְאֵי is a question; but this is only indicated by the tone. If Jonah feels pity for the withering of a small shrub, which he neither

planted nor tended, nor caused to grow, shall God not have pity with much greater right upon the creatures whom He has created and has hitherto sustained, and spare the great city Nineveh, in which more than 120,000 are living, who cannot distinguish their right hand from the left, and also much cattle? Not to be able to distinguish between the right hand and the left is a sign of mental infancy. This is not to be restricted, however, to the very earliest years, say the first three, but must be extended to the age of seven years, in which children first learn to distinguish with certainty between right and left, since, according to M. v. Niebuhr (p. 278), "the end of the seventh year is a very common division of age (it is met with, for example, even among the Persians), and we may regard it as certain that it would be adopted by the Hebrews, on account of the importance they attached to the number seven." A hundred and twenty thousand children under seven years of age would give a population of six hundred thousand, since, according to Niebuhr, the number of children of the age mentioned is one-fifth of the whole population, and there is no ground for assuming that the proportion in the East would be essentially different. This population is quite in accordance with the size of the city.<sup>1</sup> Children who cannot distinguish between right and left, cannot distinguish good from evil, and are not yet accountable. The allusion to the multitude of unaccountable children contains a fresh reason for sparing the city: God


<sup>1</sup> "Nineveh, in the broader sense," says M. v. Niebuhr, "covers an area of about 400 English square miles. Hence there were about 40,000 persons to the square mile. Jones (in a paper on Nineveh) estimates the population of the chief city, according to the area, at 174,000 souls. So that we may reckon the population of the four larger walled cities at 350,000. There remain, therefore, for the smaller places and the level ground, 300,000 men on about sixteen square miles; that is to say, nearly 20,000 men upon the square mile." He then shows, from the agricultural conditions in the district of Elberfeld and the province of Naples, how thoroughly this population suits such a district. In the district of Elberfeld there are, in round numbers, 22,000 persons to the square mile, or, apart from the two large towns, 10,000. And if we take into account the difference in fertility, this is about the same density of population as that of Nineveh. The province of Naples bears a very great resemblance to Nineveh, not only in the kind of cultivation, but also in the fertility of the soil. And there, in round numbers, 46,000 are found to the square mile, or, exclusive of the capital, 22,000 souls.

would have been obliged to destroy so many thousand innocent ones along with the guilty. Besides this, there was "much cattle" in the city. "Oxen were certainly superior to shrubs. If Jonah was right in grieving over one withered shrub, it would surely be a harder and more cruel thing for so many innocent animals to perish" (Calvin). "What could Jonah say to this? He was obliged to keep silence, defeated, as it were, by his own sentence" (Luther). The history, therefore, breaks off with these words of God, to which Jonah could make no reply, because the object of the book was now attained,—namely, to give the Israelites an insight into the true nature of the compassion of the Lord, which embraces all nations with equal love. Let us, however, give heed to the sign of the prophet Jonah, and hold fast to the confession of Him who could say of Himself, "Behold, a greater than Jonah is here!"



# M I C A H.

## INTRODUCTION.

1. ERSON OF THE PROPHET.—*Micah*, מִיכָה, an abbreviated form of מִיכַיָּה (Micaiah), as he is called in Jer. xxvi. 18, which is also a contraction of מִיכַיָּהוּ, “who is as Jehovah?”—*i.e.* one dedicated to Jehovah the incomparable God (Greek, *Μιχαλας*; Vulg. *Michæas* or *Micha*, Neh. xi. 17)—is called *hammorashthi*, the Morashtite, *i.e.* sprung from Moresheth-Gath in the plain of Judah (see at ch. i. 14), to distinguish him from the elder prophet Micah the son of Imlah (1 Kings xxii. 8 sqq.), as well as from other persons of the same name, of whom ten are met with in the Old Testament, apart from Maacah the wife of Rehoboam, a grand-daughter of Absalom (1 Kings xv. 2, 10, 13; 2 Chron. xi. 20 sqq.), who is also called מִיכַיָּהוּ in 2 Chron. xiii. 2 (see Caspari on Micha, p. 3 sqq.). Our Micah was therefore a Judæan, and prophesied, according to the heading to his book, in the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah; so that he was contemporaneous with Isaiah. He prophesied “concerning Samaria and Jerusalem,” the capitals of the two kingdoms, that is to say, concerning all Israel, the fate of which was determined by the circumstances and fates of the two capitals. The correctness of this statement, and at the same time the genuineness of the heading, are confirmed by the contents of the book. Micah not only predicts, in ch. i. 6, 7, the destruction of Samaria, which took place in the sixth year of Hezekiah; but he also mentions Asshur, the great enemy of Israel at that time, as the representative of the power of the world in its hostility to the kingdom of God (ch. v. 4); and he agrees so thoroughly with Isaiah in his description of the prevailing moral corruption, as well as in his Messianic



prophecies, that we are warranted in inferring the contemporaneous labours of the two prophets (compare Mic. ii. 11 with Isa. xxviii. 7; Mic. iii. 5-7 with Isa. xxix. 9-12; Mic. iii. 12 with Isa. xxxii. 13, 14; and Mic. iv. 1-5 with Isa. ii. 2-5; Mic. v. 2-4 with Isa. vii. 14 and ix. 5). To this we may add the account in Jer. xxvi. 18, 19, that certain men of the elders of Judah, when seeking to vindicate Jeremiah, who was condemned to death on account of his prophecies concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, quoted word for word Mic. iii. 12, to show that in the days of Hezekiah Micah had predicted the destruction of Jerusalem, without having been put to death by king Hezekiah and all Judah. It is true that Hitzig, Ewald, and others, have founded an argument upon this against the correctness of the heading to our book, according to which Micah prophesied not only under Hezekiah, but also under Jotham and Ahaz, interpreting it as meaning that the elders of Judah knew from good historical tradition the time when the particular words in Mic. iii.-v. had first been uttered. But they are wrong in this. For even if Micah had uttered this prophecy for the first time in the reign of Hezekiah, it would by no means follow that he had not also prophesied before that, namely, in the reign of Hezekiah. The relation in which Mic. iv. 1-5 stands to Isa. ii. 2-5 is sufficient of itself to point to the times of Jotham (see at ch. iv. 1). Again, Mic. vi. 16 does not suit the times of Hezekiah, but only those of Ahaz, who walked to such an extent in the ways of the kings of Israel (2 Kings xvi. 3; 2 Chron. xxviii. 2), that Judah could be charged with holding by the statutes of Omri and all the deeds of the house of Ahab. Moreover, the assumption that the elders of Judah in the time of Jehoiakim knew from good traditional authority the precise time in which Micah uttered that threat, is quite an unfounded one. They simply knew that Micah's prophetic writings sprang from the time of Hezekiah; and of the kings under whom Micah prophesied according to the statement of the writings themselves (ch. i. 1), they mention only Hezekiah, because he was the only one who "constituted a spiritual authority" (Hengstenberg). But the fact that Micah's prophecies were committed to writing in the time of Hezekiah by no means precludes the supposition that either the prophecies themselves, or certain portions of them,

were uttered orally to the people before that time. Hitzig's attempt to prove that all the three addresses in our book were composed in the time of Hezekiah, is founded upon a false historical interpretation, and upon unscriptural ideas of the nature of prophecy.

We know nothing more about the circumstances of Micah's life, than what may be gathered from his writings. According to these, he no doubt prophesied in Jerusalem, the capital of his native land. This is evident from the fact that he chiefly condemns the moral corruption of the great and mighty men of the kingdom, and makes Zion and Jerusalem for the most part the centre of his prophecies. There is not sufficient ground for Ewald's assertion, that there are many signs which indicate an inhabitant of the plain. The introduction of the names of particular places in Judah in ch. i. 10-15 furnishes no proof of any "peculiar interest in the Jewish country, more especially the Jewish lowland, as being his home." Only a portion of the places mentioned in this passage were situated in the lowland. Moreover, Isaiah also enumerates a whole list of places in Judah (Isa. x. 28-32), and is minutely acquainted with the circumstances of Zebulun and Naphtali, and the neighbourhood of the Sea of Galilee (ch. viii. 23), although he was settled in Jerusalem, and had probably been born there. Still more precarious is the inference that has been drawn from Micah's somewhat rough and rugged style. For all that can be adduced in support of this is confined to the rapid and abrupt transitions from threatening to promise, in which he resembles Hosea (*vid.* ch. ii. 1-11, 12, 13, iii. 9-12, iv. 1 sqq.), and generally from one subject to another (*e.g.* ch. vii. 1-7, vii. 11-13), but more especially from one person to another, or from one number and gender to another (ch. i. 10, vi. 16, vii. 15-19). This may be all explained from the vivacity of his own individuality, and the excited state of his mind; and simply indicates the boldness of his words, but not any want of culture in his style. His words are never deficient in clearness or evenness; whilst in abundance of figures, similes (ch. i. 8, 16, ii. 12, 13, iv. 9, etc.), and rhetorical tropes, as well as in speciality, paronomasia, in play upon words (ch. i. 10-15), and dialogue (ch. ii. 7-11, vi. 1-8, vii. 7-20), his style resembles that of his highly cultivated contemporary Isaiah. The traditional accounts

respecting his descent from the tribe of Ephraim, his death, and his grave, contained in Ps. Dorotheus and Ps. Epiphanius (collected in Carpzovii, *Introd.* iii. pp. 373-4), have partly originated in the confounding of our Micah with the elder Micah the son of Imlah, who lived in the reign of Ahab, and are partly inferences from the heading to our book.

2. THE BOOK OF MICAH.—The contents of the book consist of three prophetic addresses, which are clearly distinguished from one another in form by similarity of introduction (all three commencing with שָׁמַע, ch. i. 2, iii. 1, vi. 1), and substantially by their contents, which pass through the various stages of reproof, threat, and promise, and are thereby rounded off; so that all attempts at any other division, such as that of Ewald to connect ch. iii. with the first address, or to arrange the book in two parts (ch. i.-v. and vi. vii.), are obviously arbitrary. Ch. iii. can only be connected with ch. i. and ii. so as to form one address, on the groundless assumption that ch. ii. 12, 13 are a later gloss that has crept into the text; and though the וְאִמֶּר before שָׁמַע in ch. iii. 1 does indeed connect the second address more closely with the first than with the third, it by no means warrants our dividing the whole book into two parts. In the three addresses, ch. i. ii., iii.-v., and vi. vii., we have not “three prophecies of Micah, delivered to the people at three different times,” as Hitzig and Maurer still suppose, but merely a condensation rhetorically arranged of the essential contents of his verbal utterances, as committed to writing by Micah himself at the end of his prophetic course in the time of Hezekiah. For these addresses are proved to be merely portions or sections of a single whole, by the absence of all reference to the concrete circumstances of any particular portion of time, and still more by their organic combination, as seen in the clearly marked and carefully planned progressive movement apparent in their contents. In the *first* address, after a general announcement of judgment on account of the sins of Israel (ch. i. 2-5), Micah predicts the destruction of Samaria (vers. 6, 7), and the devastation of Judah with the deportation of its inhabitants (vers. 8-16), and justifies this threat by an earnest and brief reproof of the existing acts of injustice and violence on the part of the great men (ch. ii. 1-5), and a sharp correc-

tion of their abettors the false prophets (vers. 6-11); after which this address closes with a brief promise of the eventual restoration of the remnant of Israel to favour (vers. 12, 13). The *second* address spreads itself out still more elaborately in the first half (ch. iii.) over the sins and crimes of the heads of the nation, viz. the princes, the false prophets, the unjust judges and bad priests; and because of these sins threatens the destruction and utter devastation of Zion, and the temple hill. As an antithesis to this threat, the second half (ch. iv. and v.) contains a promise, commencing with the opening of a prospect of the glorification of Zion and Israel at the end of the days (ch. iv. 1-7), advancing to an assurance of the restoration of the former dominion of the daughter of Zion, after the people have first been carried away to Babel, and rescued again out of the hand of their enemies, and of her triumph in the last conflict with the nations of the world (vers. 8-14), and culminating in the announcement of the birth of the great Ruler in Israel, who will arise out of Bethlehem, and feed His people in the majesty of Jehovah (ch. v. 1-5), and not only protect the rescued remnant of Jacob against the attacks of the imperial kingdom, but exalt it into a beneficent, and at the same time fearful, power to the heathen nations (vers. 6-8), and establish a kingdom of blessed peace (vers. 9-14). The *third* address sets forth the way to salvation in the dramatic dress of a law-suit between Jehovah and His people, by exhibiting the divine benefits for which Israel had repaid its God with ingratitude, and by a repeated allusion to the prevailing sins and unrighteousness which God must punish (ch. vi.), and also by showing how the consciousness of misery will lead to the penitential confession of guilt and to conversion, and by encouraging to believing trust in the compassion or fidelity of the Lord, who will once more have compassion upon His people, rebuild Zion, and humble the foe, and by renewing the miracles of the olden time fill all nations with fear of His omnipotence (ch. vii. 1-17); after which the prophet closes his book with praise for the sin-forgiving grace of the Lord (vers. 18-20).

From this general survey of the contents of the three addresses, their internal connection may be at once perceived. In the first the threatening of judgment predominates; in the second the announcement of the Messianic salvation; in the

third there follows the *parænesis* or admonition to repentance and humiliation under the chastising hand of the Lord, in order to participate in the promised salvation. As this admonition rests upon the threat of judgment and promise of salvation in the two previous addresses, so does the allusion to the judgment contained in the words, "Then will they cry to Jehovah, and He will not answer them" (ch. iii. 4), presuppose the announcement in ch. i. of the judgment about to burst upon the land, without which it would be perfectly unintelligible. Consequently there can be no doubt whatever that Micah has simply concentrated the quintessence of his oral discourses into the addresses contained in his book. This quintessence, moreover, shows clearly enough that our prophet was not at all behind his contemporary Isaiah, either in the clearness and distinctness of his Messianic announcements, or in the power and energy with which he combated the sins and vices of the nation. There is simply this essential difference, so far as the latter point is concerned, that he merely combats the religious and moral corruptness of the rulers of the nation, and does not touch upon their conduct on its political side. (For the exegetical literature, see my *Lehrbuch der Einleitung*, p. 296.)

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## EXPOSITION.

### I. ISRAEL'S BANISHMENT INTO EXILE, AND RESTORATION.—

#### CHAP. I. AND II.

The prophet's first address is throughout of a threatening and punitive character; it is not till quite the close, that the sun of divine grace breaks brightly shining through the thunder clouds of judgment. The announcement of the judgment upon Samaria as well as upon the kingdom of Judah and Jerusalem forms the first part (ch. i. 2-16); the reproof of the sins, especially of the unrighteousness of the great and mighty of the nation, the second part (ch. ii. 1-11); and a brief but very comprehensive announcement of the salvation that will dawn upon the remnant of all Israel after the judgment, the conclusion of the address (ch. ii. 12, 13).

## THE JUDGMENT UPON SAMARIA AND JUDAH.—CHAP. I.

Micah, commencing with the appeal to all nations to observe the coming of the Lord for judgment upon the earth (vers. 2-4), announces to the people of Israel, on account of its sins and its apostasy from the Lord, the destruction of Samaria (vers. 5-7) and the spreading of the judgment over Judah; and shows how, passing from place to place, and proceeding to Jerusalem, and even farther, it will throw the kingdom into deep lamentation on account of the carrying away of its inhabitants.

Vers. 1-7. The heading in ver. 1 has been explained in the introduction. Vers. 2-4 form the introduction to the prophet's address. Ver. 2. "*Hear, all ye nations: observe, O earth, and that which fills it: and let the Lord Jehovah be a witness against you, the Lord out of His holy palace.*" Ver. 3. "*For, behold, Jehovah cometh forth from His place, and cometh down, and marcheth over the high places of the earth.*" Ver. 4. "*And the mountains will melt under Him, and the valleys split, like wax before the fire, like water poured out upon a slope.*" The introductory words, "Hear, ye nations all," are taken by Micah from his earlier namesake the son of Imlah (1 Kings xxii. 28). As the latter, in his attack upon the false prophets, called all nations as witnesses to confirm the truth of his prophecy, so does Micah the Morashtite commence his prophetic testimony with the same appeal, so as to announce his labours at the very outset as a continuation of the activity of his predecessor who had been so zealous for the Lord. As the son of Imlah had to contend against the false prophets as seducers of the nation, so has also the Morashtite (compare ch. ii. 6, 11, iii. 5, 11); and as the former had to announce to both kingdoms the judgment that would come upon them on account of their sins, so has also the latter; and he does it by frequently referring to the prophecy of the elder Micah, not only by designating the false prophets as those who walk after the *rûäch* and lie, *sheqer* (ch. ii. 11), which recalls to mind the *rûäch sheqer* of the prophets of Ahab (1 Kings xxii. 22, 23), but also in his use of the figures of the horn of iron in ch. iv. 13, 14 (compare the horns of iron of the false prophet Zedekiah in 1 Kings xxii. 11), and of the smiting upon the cheek in ch. iv. 14 (compare 1 Kings xxii. 14). '*Ammîm kullâm* does not mean all the

tribes of Israel; still less does it mean warlike nations. \**Ammīm* never has the second meaning, and the first it has only in the primitive language of the Pentateuch. But here both these meanings are precluded by the parallel אֶרֶץ וּמִלְאָה; for this expression invariably signifies the whole earth, with that which fills it, except in such a case as Jer. viii. 16, where *'erets* is restricted to the land of Israel by the preceding *hā'ārets*, or Ezek. xii. 19, where it is so restricted by the suffix *'artsāh*. The appeal to the earth and its fulness is similar to the appeals to the heaven and the earth in Isa. i. 2 and Deut. xxxii. 1. All nations, yea the whole earth, and all creatures upon it, are to hear, because the judgment which the prophet has to announce to Israel affects the whole earth (vers. 3, 4), the judgment upon Israel being connected with the judgment upon all nations, or forming a portion of that judgment. In the second clause of the verse, "the Lord Jehovah be witness against you," it is doubtful who is addressed in the expression "against you." The words cannot well be addressed to all nations and to the earth, because the Lord only rises up as a witness against the man who has despised His word and transgressed His commandments. For being a witness is not equivalent to witnessing or giving testimony by words,—say, for example, by the admonitory and corrective address of the prophet which follows, as C. B. Michaelis supposes,—but refers to the practical testimony given by the Lord in the judgment (vers. 3 sqq.), as in Mal. iii. 5 and Jer. xlii. 5. Now, although the Lord is described as the Judge of the world in vers. 3 and 4, yet, according to vers. 5 sqq., He only comes to execute judgment upon Israel. Consequently we must refer the words "to you" to Israel, or rather to the capitals Samaria and Jerusalem mentioned in ver. 1, just as in Nahum i. 8 the suffix simply refers to the Nineveh mentioned in the heading, to which there has been no further allusion in vers. 2–7. This view is also favoured by the fact that Micah summons all nations to hear his word, in the same sense as his earlier namesake in 1 Kings xxii. 28. What the prophet announces in word, the Lord will confirm by deed,—namely, by executing the predicted judgment,—and indeed "the Lord out of His holy temple," *i.e.* the heaven where He is enthroned (Ps. xi. 4); for (ver. 3) the Lord will rise up from thence, and striding over the high places of the earth, *i.e.*

as unbounded Ruler of the world (cf. Amos iv. 13 and Dent. xxxii. 13), will come down in fire, so that the mountains melt before Him, that is to say, as Judge of the world. The description of this theophany is founded upon the idea of a terrible storm and earthquake, as in Ps. xviii. 8 sqq. The mountains melt (Judg. v. 4 and Ps. lxxviii. 9) with the streams of water, which discharge themselves from heaven (Judg. v. 4), and the valleys split with the deep channels cut out by the torrents of water. The similes, "like wax," etc. (as in Ps. lxxviii. 3), and "like water," etc., are intended to express the complete dissolution of mountains and valleys. The actual facts answering to this description are the destructive influences exerted upon nature by great national judgments.

This judicial interposition on the part of God is occasioned by the sin of Israel. Ver. 5. *"For the apostasy of Jacob (is) all this, and for the sins of the house of Israel. Who is Jacob's apostasy? is it not Samaria? And who Judah's high places? is it not Jerusalem?"* Ver. 6. *"Therefore I make Samaria into a stone-heap of the field, into plantations of vines; and I pour her stones into the valley, and I will lay bare her foundations."* Ver. 7. *"And all her stone images will be beaten to pieces, and all her lovers' gifts be burned with fire, and all her idols will I make into a waste: for she has gathered them of prostitute's hire, and to prostitute's hire shall they return."* "All this" refers to the coming of Jehovah to judgment announced in vers. 3, 4. This takes place on account of the apostasy and the sins of Israel.  $\text{נָּ$  (for) used to denote reward or wages, as in 2 Sam. iii. 27 compared with ver. 30. Jacob and Israel in ver. 5a are synonymous, signifying the whole of the covenant nation, as we may see from the fact that in ver. 5b Jacob and not Israel is the epithet applied to the ten tribes in distinction from Judah.  $\text{וְ$ , who?—referring to the author. The apostasy of Israel originates with Samaria; the worship on the high places with Jerusalem. The capitals of the two kingdoms are the authors of the apostasy, as the centres and sources of the corruption which has spread from them over the kingdoms. The allusion to the *bāmōth* of the illegal worship of the high places, which even the most godly kings were unable to abolish (see at 1 Kings xv. 14), shows, moreover, that  $\text{עַשְׂבָּרָה$  denotes that religious apostasy from Jehovah which was formally sanctioned in the



kingdom of the ten tribes by the introduction of the calf-worship. But because this apostasy commenced in the kingdom of the ten tribes, the punishment would fall upon this kingdom first, and Samaria would be utterly destroyed. Stone-heaps of the field and vineyard plantations harmonize badly, in Hitzig's view: he therefore proposes to alter the text. But there is no necessity for this. The point of comparison is simply that Samaria will be so destroyed, that not a single trace of a city will be left, and the site thereof will become like a ploughed field or plain. הַשָּׂדֶה is added to עַי, a heap of ruins or stones, to strengthen it. Samaria shall become like a heap, not of ruins or building stones, but of stones collected from the field. לְמַטְעֵי בָרִים, i.e. into arable land upon which you can plant vineyards. The figure answers to the situation of Samaria upon a hill in a very fruitful region, which was well adapted for planting vineyards (see at Amos iii. 9). The situation of the city helps to explain the casting of its stones into the valley. Laying bare the foundations denotes destruction to the very foundation (cf. Ps. cxxxvii. 7). On the destruction of the city all its idols will be annihilated. *P'silim*, idols, as in Isa. x. 10; not wooden idols, however, to which the expression *yukkattû*, smitten to pieces, would not apply, but stone idols, from *pâsal* (Ex. xxxiv. 1). By the lovers' gifts (*'ethnân*, see at Hos. ix. 1) we are to understand, not "the riches of the city or their possessions, inasmuch as the idolaters regarded their wealth and prosperity as a reward from their gods, according to Hos. ii. 7, 14" (Rashi, Hitzig, and others), but the temple gifts, "gifts suspended in the temples and sacred places in honour of the gods" (Rosenmüller), by which the temple worship with its apparatus were maintained; so that by *'ethnân* we may understand the entire apparatus of religious worship. For the parallelism of the clauses requires that the word should be restricted to this. עֲצִיִּים are also idolatrous images. "To make them into a waste," i.e. not only to divest them of their ornament, but so utterly to destroy them that the place where they once stood becomes waste. The next clause, containing the reason, must not be restricted to the *'atsabbîm*, as Hitzig supposes, but refers to the two clauses of the first hemistich, so that *p'silim* and *'atsabbîm* are to be supplied as objects to *qibbâtsâh* (she gathered), and to be regarded as the subject to

*yāshūbhā* (shall return). Samaria gathered together the entire apparatus of her idolatrous worship from prostitute's gifts (the wages of prostitution), namely, through gifts presented by the idolaters. The acquisition of all this is described as the gain of prostitute's wages, according to the scriptural view that idolatry was spiritual whoredom. There is no ground for thinking of literal wages of prostitution, or money which flowed into the temples from the voluptuous worship of Aphrodite, because Micah had in his mind not literal (heathenish) idolatry, but simply the transformation of the Jehovah-worship into idolatry by the worship of Jehovah under the symbols of the golden calves. These things return back to the wages of prostitution, *i.e.* they become this once more (cf. Gen. iii. 19) by being carried away by the enemies, who conquer the city and destroy it, and being applied to their idolatrous worship. On the capture of cities, the idols and temple treasures were carried away (cf. Isa. xlvi. 1, 2; Dan. i. 3).

Vers. 8-16. The judgment will not stop at Samaria, however, but spread over Judah. The prophet depicts this by saying that he will go about mourning as a prisoner, to set forth the misery that will come upon Judah (vers. 8, 9); and then, to confirm this, he announces to a series of cities the fate awaiting them, or rather awaiting the kingdom, by a continued play upon words founded upon their names (vers. 10-15); and finally he summons Zion to deep mourning (ver. 16). Ver. 8. *"Therefore will I lament and howl, I will go spoiled and naked: I will keep lamentation like the jackals, and mourning like the ostriches."* Ver. 9. *"For her stripes are malignant; for it comes to Judah, reaches to the gate of my people, to Jerusalem."* על־זאת points back to what precedes, and is then explained in ver. 9. The prophet will lament over the destruction of Samaria, because the judgment which has befallen this city will come upon Judah also. Micah does not speak in his own name here as a patriot (Hitzig), but in the name of his nation, with which he identifies himself as being a member thereof. This is indisputably evident from the expression אֵילָכָה שִׁילָל וְעָרוֹם, which describes the costume of a prisoner, not that of a mourner. The form אֵילָכָה with י appears to have been simply suggested by אֵילָלָה. שִׁילָל is formed like הִיָּדַר in Isa. xvi. 9, 10, and other similar words (see Olshausen, *Gramm.* p. 342). The Masoretes

have substituted <sup>לל</sup>ל, after Job xii. 17, but without the slightest reason. It does not mean "barefooted," ἀνυπόδητος (LXX.), for which there was already <sup>חלל</sup>חלל in the language (2 Sam. xv. 30; Isa. xx. 2, 3; Jer. ii. 25), but plundered, spoiled. <sup>עיר</sup>עיר, naked, i.e. without upper garment (see my comm. on 1 Sam. xix. 24), not merely *vestitu solido et decente privatus*. Mourners do indeed go barefooted (*yáchēph*, see 2 Sam. xv. 30), and in deep mourning in a hairy garment (*saq*, 2 Sam. iii. 31; Gen. xxxvii. 34, etc.), but not plundered and naked. The assertion, however, that a man was called 'ārōm when he had put on a mourning garment (*saq*, sackcloth) in the place of his upper garment, derives no support from Isa. xx. 2, but rather a refutation. For there the prophet does not go about 'ārōm v' *yáchēph*, i.e. in the dress of a prisoner, to symbolize the captivity of Egypt, till after he has loosened the hairy garment (*saq*) from his loins, i.e. taken it off. And here also the plundering of the prophet and his walking naked are to be understood in the same way. Micah's intention is not only to exhibit publicly his mourning for the approaching calamity of Judah, but also to set forth in a symbolical form the fate that awaits the Judæans. And he can only do this by including himself in the nation, and exhibiting the fate of the nation in his own person. Wailing like jackals and ostriches is a loud, strong, mournful cry, those animals being distinguished by a mournful wail; see the comm. on Job xxx. 29, which passage may possibly have floated before the prophet's mind. Thus shall Judah wail, because the stroke which falls upon Samaria is malignant, i.e. incurable (the suffix attached to <sup>מכוריה</sup>מכוריה refers to *Shōm'rōn*, Samaria, in vers. 6 and 7. For the singular of the predicate before a subject in the plural, see Ewald, § 295, a, and 317, a). It reaches to Judah, yea, to Jerusalem. Jerusalem, as the capital, is called the "gate of my people," because in it *par excellence* the people went out and in. That <sup>ו</sup>ו is not exclusive here, but inclusive, embracing the *terminus ad quem*, is evident from the parallel "even to Judah;" for if it only reached to the border of Judah, it would not have been able to come to Jerusalem; and still more clearly so from the description in vers. 10 sqq. The fact that Jerusalem is not mentioned till after Judah is to be interpreted rhetorically, and not geographically. Even the capital, where the temple of Jehovah stood, would not be spared.

The penetration of the judgment into Judah is now clearly depicted by an individualizing enumeration of a number of cities which will be smitten by it. Ver. 10. "*Go not to Gath to declare it; weeping, weep not. At Beth-Leafra (dust-home) I have strewed dust upon myself.*" Ver. 11. "*Pass thou away, O inhabitress of Shafir (beautiful city), stripped in shame. The inhabitress of Zaanan (departure) has not departed; the lamentation of Beth-Haēzel (near-house) takes from you the standing near it.*" Ver. 12. "*For the inhabitress of Maroth (bitterness) writhes for good; for evil has come down from Jehovah to the gate of Jerusalem.*" The description commences with words borrowed from David's elegy on the death of Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam. i. 20), "*Publish it not in Gath,*" in which there is a play upon the words in *b'gath* and *taggidū*. The Philistines are not to hear of the distress of Judah, lest they should rejoice over it. There is also a play upon words in *בְּכֹי אֶל-חֶבְכֵי*. The sentence belongs to what precedes, and supplies the fuller definition, that they are not to proclaim the calamity in Gath with weeping, i.e. not to weep over it there.<sup>1</sup> After this reminiscence of the mourning of David for Saul, which expresses the greatness of the grief, and is all the more significant, because in the approaching catastrophe Judah is also to lose its king (cf. iv. 9), so that David is to experience the fate of Saul

<sup>1</sup> On the ground of the Septuagint rendering, καὶ οἱ Ἐφραΐμ μὴ ἀναιροῦσθε, most of the modern expositors follow Reland (*Palæst. ill.* p. 534 sqq.) in the opinion that *בְּכֹי* is the name of a city, a contraction of *בְּעֶכְבֵי*, "and weep not at Acco." There is no force in the objection brought against this by Caspari (*Mich.* p. 110), namely, that in that case the inhabitants of both kingdoms must have stood out before the prophet's mind in hemistich *a*, which, though not rendered actually impossible by ver. 9*a*, and the expression *עַל-זִמְתָּהּ* in ver. 8, is hardly reconcilable with the fact that from ver. 11 onwards Judah only stands out before his mind, and that in vers. 8-10 the distress of his people, in the stricter sense (i.e. of Judah), is obviously the pre-eminent object of his mourning. For Acco would not be taken into consideration as a city of the kingdom of Israel, but as a city inhabited by heathen, since, according to Judg. i. 31, the Canaanites were not driven out of Acco, and it cannot be shown from any passage of the Old Testament that this city ever came into the actual possession of the Israelites. It is evidently a more important objection to the supposed contraction, that not a single analogous case can be pointed out. The forms *נִשְׁקָעָה* for *נִשְׁקָעָה* (Amos viii. 8) and *בְּעֵלָה* for *בְּעֵלָה* (Josh. xix. 3 and xv. 29) are of a different kind; and the blending of the prepo-

(Hengstenberg), Micah mentions places in which Judah will mourn, or, at any rate, experience something very painful. From ver. 10b to ver. 15 he mentions ten places, whose names, with a very slight alteration, were adapted for *jeux de mots*, with which to depict what would happen to them or take place within them. The number ten (the stamp of completeness, pointing to the fact that the judgment would be a complete one, spreading over the whole kingdom) is divided into twice five by the statement, which is repeated in ver. 12, that the calamity would come to the gate of Jerusalem; five places being mentioned before Jerusalem (vers. 10–12), and five after (vers. 13–15). This division makes Hengstenberg's conjecture a very natural one, viz. that the five places mentioned before Jerusalem are to be sought for to the north of Jerusalem, and the others to the south or south-west, and that in this way Micah indicates that the judgment will proceed from the north to the south. On the other hand, Caspari's opinion, that the prophet simply enumerates certain places in the neighbourhood of More-sheth, his own home, rests upon no firm foundation. בֵּית לֵעֶפְרָה is probably the *Ophra* of Benjamin (עֶפְרָה, Josh. xviii. 23), which was situated, according to Eusebius, not far from Bethel (see comm. on Josh. *l.c.*). It is pointed with *pathach* here for the sake of the paronomasia with עָפָר. The *chethib* הַחֶתִּיב is the correct reading, the *keri* הַחֶתִּיבִּי being merely an emen-

sition ב with the noun עָפָר, by dropping the *y*, so as to form one word, is altogether unparalleled. The Septuagint translation furnishes no sufficient authority for such an assumption. All that we can infer from the fact that Eusebius has adopted the reading *Ἐναχίμ* in his *Onom.* (ed. Lars. p. 188), observing at the same time that this name occurs in Micah, whilst Aq. and Symm. have *ἐν κλαυθμῷ* (*in fletu*) instead, is that these Greek fathers regarded the *Ἐναχίμ* of the LXX. as the name of a place; but this does not in the smallest degree prove the correctness of the LXX. rendering. Nor does the position of בְּכִי before אֶל furnish any tenable ground for maintaining that this word cannot be the inf. abs. of בָּכָה, but must contain the name of a place. The assertion of Hitzig, that "if the word were regarded as an inf. abs., neither the inf. itself nor אֶל for לֹא would be admissible in a negative sentence (Jer. xxii. 10)," has no grammatical foundation. It is by no means a necessary consequence, that because אֶל cannot be connected with the inf. abs. (Ewald, § 350, *a*), therefore the inf. abs. could not be written before a finite verb with אֶל for the sake of emphasis.

dation springing out of a misunderstanding of the true meaning. לְהַפִּילֵשׁ does not mean to revolve, but to bestrew one's self. Bestrewing with dust or ashes was a sign of deep mourning (Jer. vi. 26; 2 Sam. xiii. 19). The prophet speaks in the name of the people of what the people will do. The inhabitants of Shafir are to go stripped into captivity. עָבַר, to pass by, here in the sense of moving forwards. The plural לָכֶם is to be accounted for from the fact that *yōshebheeth* is the population. *Shāphūr*, i.e. beautiful city, is not the same as the *Shāmūr* in Josh. xv. 48, for this was situated in the south-west of the mountains of Judah; nor the same as the *Shāmūr* in the mountains of Ephraim (Judg. x. 1), which did not belong to the kingdom of Judah; but is a place to the north of Jerusalem, of which nothing further is known. The statement in the *Onomast. s.v. Σαφείρ*—*ἐν γῇ ὀρεινῇ* between Eleutheropolis and Askalon—is probably intended to apply to the *Shāmūr* of Joshua; but this is evidently erroneous, as the country between Eleutheropolis and Askalon did not belong to the mountains of Judah, but to the Shephelah. עָרִיהֶבֶשֶׁת, a combination like עָרִיהֶצֶק in Ps. xlv. 5, equivalent to stripping which is shame, shame-nakedness = ignominious stripping. עָרִיהֶ is an accusative defining the manner in which they would go out. The next two clauses are difficult to explain. צִאֲנָן, a play upon words with צִאֲנָה, is traceable to this verb, so far as its meaning is concerned. The primary meaning of the name is uncertain; the more modern commentators combine it with צִאֲנָן, in the sense of rich in flocks. The situation of *Zaanan* is quite unknown. The supposed identity with *Zenān* (see at Josh. xv. 37) must be given up, as *Zenān* was in the plain, and *Zaanan* was most probably to the north of Jerusalem. The meaning of the clause can hardly be any other than this, that the population of *Zaanan* had not gone out of their city to this war from fear of the enemy, but, on the contrary, had fallen back behind their walls (Ros., Casp., Hitzig). בֵּית הָאֶצֶל is most likely the same as אֶצֶל in Zech. xiv. 5, a place in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, to the east of the Mount of Olives, as *Beth* is frequently omitted in the names of places (see Ges. *Thes.* p. 193). *Etsel* signifies side, and as an adverb or preposition, "by the side of." This meaning comes into consideration here. The thought of the words *mispad beth*, etc., might be:

“The lamentation of *Beth-Haezel* will take away its standing (the standing by the side of it, *'etslō*) from you (Judæans), *i.e.* will not allow you to tarry there as fugitives (cf. Jer. xlviii. 45). The distress into which the enemy staying there has plunged Beth-Haezel, will make it impossible for you to stop there” (Hitzig, Caspari). But the next clause, which is connected by *וְ*, does not suit this explanation (ver. 12b). The only way in which this clause can be made to follow suitably as an explanation is by taking the words thus: “The lamentation of Beth-Haezel will take its standing (the stopping of the calamity or judgment) from you, *i.e.* the calamity will not stop at Beth-Haezel (at the near house), *i.e.* stop near it, as we should expect from its name; for (ver. 12) Maroth, which stands further off, will feel pain,” etc. With this view, which Caspari also suggests, Hengstenberg (on Zech. xiv. 5) agrees in the main, except that he refers the suffix in *מְסַפֵּר עִמָּדֶיהָ*, and renders the words thus: “The lamentation of Beth-Haezel will take its stopping away from you, *i.e.* will not allow you the stopping of the lamentation.” Grammatically considered, this connection is the more natural one; but there is this objection, that it cannot be shown that *עָמַד* is used in the sense of the stopping or ceasing of a lamentation, whereas the supposition that the suffix refers to the calamity simply by *constructio ad sensum* has all the less difficulty, inasmuch as the calamity has already been hinted at in the verb *נָצַח* in ver. 9, and in ver. 10a also it forms the object to be supplied in thought. *Maroth* (lit. something bitter, bitternesses) is quite unknown; it is simply evident, from the explanatory clause *בֵּית יְרֵד וְנִי*, that it was situated in the immediate neighbourhood of Jerusalem. The inhabitants of Maroth writhe (*chálâh*, from *châl*, to writhe with pain, like a woman in child-birth), because they are also smitten with the calamity, when it comes down to the gate of Jerusalem. *לְטוֹב*, “on account of the good,” which they have lost, or are about to lose.

And the judgment will not even stop at Jerusalem, but will spread still further over the land. This spreading is depicted in vers. 13–15 in the same manner as before. Ver. 13. “*Harness the horse to the chariot, O inhabitress of Lachish! It was the beginning of sin to the daughter Zion, that the iniquities of Israel were found in her.*” Ver. 14. *Therefore wilt thou give*

*dismissal-presents to Moresheth-Gath (i.e. the betrothed of Gath): the houses of Achzib (lying fountain) become a lying brook for Israel's kings. Ver. 15. I will still bring thee the heir, O inhabitress of Mareshah (hereditary city); the nobility of Israel will come to Adullam. Ver. 16. Make thyself bald, and shave thyself upon the sons of thy delights: spread out thy baldness like the eagle; for they have wandered away from thee."* The inhabitants of Lachish, a fortified city in the Shephelah, to the west of Eleutheropolis, preserved in the ruins of *Um Lakis* (see at Josh. x. 3), are to harness the horses to the chariot (*rekhes*, a runner; see at 1 Kings v. 8: the word is used as ringing with *lákhtish*), namely, to flee as rapidly as possible before the advancing foe. חֲרֹם, ἀπ. λεγ. "to bind . . . the horse to the chariot," answering to the Latin *currum jungere equis*. Upon this city will the judgment fall with especial severity, because it has grievously sinned. It was the beginning of sin to the daughter of Zion, i.e. to the population of Jerusalem; it was the first to grant admission to the iniquities of Israel, i.e. to the idolatry of the image-worship of the ten tribes (for מַשְׁכָּן יִשְׂרָאֵל, see ver. 5 and Amos iii. 14), which penetrated even to the capital. Nothing more is known of this, as the historical books contain no account of it. For this reason, namely, because the sin of Israel found admission into Jerusalem, she (the daughter Zion) will be obliged to renounce Moresheth-Gath. This is the thought of ver. 14a, the drapery of which rests upon the resemblance in sound between *Moresheth* and *m'orásâh*, the betrothed (Deut. xxii. 23). *Shillûchîm*, dismissal, denotes anything belonging to a man, which he dismisses or gives up for a time, or for ever. It is applied in Ex. xviii. 2 to the sending away of wife and children to the father-in-law for a time; and in 1 Kings ix. 16 to a dowry, or the present which a father gives to his daughter when she is married and leaves his house. The meaning "divorce," i.e. *sēpher k'rîthuth* (Deut. xxiv. 1, 3), has been arbitrarily forced upon the word. The meaning is not to be determined from *shillêäch* in Jer. iii. 8, as Hitzig supposes, but from 1 Kings ix. 16, where the same expression occurs, except that it is construed with ל, which makes no material difference. For לָתֵן signifies to give to a person, either to lay upon him or to hand to him; לָתֵן, to give to him. The object given by Zion to Moresheth as a parting present is not



mentioned, but it is really the city itself; for the meaning is simply this: Zion will be obliged to relinquish all further claim to Moresheth, to give it up to the enemy. *Moresheth* is not an appellative, as the old translators suppose, but the proper name of Micah's home; and Gath is a more precise definition of its situation—"by Gath," viz. the well-known Philistian capital, analogous to Bethlehem-Judah in Judg. xvii. 7-9, xix. 1, or Abel-Maim (Abel by the water) in 2 Chron. xvi. 4. According to Jerome (comm. in Mich. Prol.), *Morasthi, qui usque hodie juxta Eleutheropolin, urbem Palæstinæ, haud grandis est viculus* (cf. Robinson, *Pal.* ii. p. 423). The context does not admit of our taking the word in an appellative sense, "possession of Gath," since the prophet does not mean to say that Judah will have to give up to the enemy a place belonging to Gath, but rather that it will have to give up the cities of its own possession. For, as Maurer correctly observes, "when the enemy is at the gate, men think of defending the kingdom, not of enlarging it." But if the addition of the term *Gath* is not merely intended to define the situation of Moresheth with greater minuteness, or to distinguish it from other places of the same name, and if the play upon words in *Moresheth* was intended to point to a closer relation to Gath, the thought expressed could only be, that the place situated in the neighbourhood of Gath had frequently been taken by the Philistines, or claimed as their property, and not that they were in actual possession of Gath at this time. The play upon words in the second clause of the verse also points to the loss of places in Judæa: "the houses of *Achzib* will become *Achzab* to the kings of Israel." *אֲחִזִּיב*, a lie, for *נַחַל אֲחִזִּיב*, is a stream which dries up in the hot season, and deceives the expectation of the traveller that he shall find water (Jer. xv. 18; cf. Job vi. 15 sqq.). *Achzib*, a city in the plain of Judah, whose name has been preserved in the ruins of *Kussabeh*, to the south-west of Beit-Jibrin (see at Josh. xv. 44). The houses of Achzib are mentioned, because they are, properly speaking, to be compared to the contents of the river's bed, whereas the ground on which they stood, with the wall that surrounded them, answered to the river's bed itself (*Hitzig*), so that the words do not denote the loss or destruction of the houses so much as the loss of the city itself. The "kings of Israel" are not the kings of

Samaria and Judah, for Achzib belonged to the kingdom of Judah alone, but the kings of Judah who followed one another (cf. Jer. xix. 13); so that the plural is to be understood as relating to the monarchy of Israel (Judah). *Mareshah* will also pass into other hands. This is affirmed in the words, "I will bring the heir to thee again" (אֲנִי for אֲנִיָּהּ, as in 1 Kings xxi. 29). The first heir of Mareshah was the Israelites, who received the city, which had been previously occupied by the Canaanites, for their possession on the conquest of the land. The second heir will be the enemy, into whose possession the land is now to pass. *Mareshah*, also in the lowland of Judah, has been preserved, so far as the name is concerned, in the ruins of *Marash* (see at Josh. xv. 44, and Tobler, *Dritte Wanderung*, pp. 129, 142-3). To the north of this was *Adullam* (see at Josh. xii. 15), which has not yet been discovered, but which Tobler (p. 151) erroneously seeks for in *Bêt Dûla*. Micah mentions it simply on account of the cave there (1 Sam. xxii. 1), as a place of refuge, to which the great and glorious of Israel would flee ("the glory of Israel," as in Isa. v. 13). The description is rounded off in ver. 16, by returning to the thought that Zion would mourn deeply over the carrying away of the people, with which it had first set out in ver. 8. In יְהוּיָהּ Zion is addressed as the mother of the people. קָרַח, to shave smooth, and קָצַח, to cut off the hair, are synonyms, which are here combined to strengthen the meaning. The children of thy delights, in whom thou hast thy pleasure, are the members of the nation. Shaving the head bald, or shaving a bald place, was a sign of mourning, which had been handed down as a traditional custom in Israel, in spite of the prohibition in Deut. xiv. 1 (see at Lev. xix. 28). The bald place is to be made to spread out like that of a *nesher*, i.e. not the true eagle, but the vulture, which was also commonly classed in the eagle family,—either the bearded vulture, *vultur barbatus* (see Oedmann, *Verm. Samml.* i. p. 54 sqq.), or more probably the carrion vulture, *vultur percnopterus* L., common in Egypt, and also in Palestine, which has the front part of the head completely bald, and only a few hairs at the back of the head, so that a bald place may very well be attributed to it (see Hasselquist, *Reise*, p. 286 sqq.). The words cannot possibly be understood as referring to the yearly moulting of the eagle itself.

If we inquire still further as to the fulfilment of the prophecy concerning Judah (vers. 8-16), it cannot be referred, or speaking more correctly, it must not be restricted, to the Assyrian invasion, as Theod., Cyril, Marck, and others suppose. For the carrying away of Judah, which is hinted at in ver. 11, and clearly expressed in ver. 16, was not effected by the Assyrians, but by the Chaldeans; and that Micah himself did not expect this judgment from the Assyrians, but from Babel, is perfectly obvious from ch. iv. 10, where he mentions Babel as the place to which Judah was to be carried into exile. At the same time, we must not exclude the Assyrian oppression altogether; for Sennacherib had not only already conquered the greater part of Judah, and penetrated to the very gates of Jerusalem (2 Kings xviii. 13, 14, xix.; Isa. xxxvi.-xxxviii.), but would have destroyed the kingdom of Judah, as his predecessor Shalmaneser had destroyed the kingdom of Israel, if the Lord had not heard the prayer of His servant Hezekiah, and miraculously destroyed Sennacherib's army before the walls of Jerusalem. Micah prophesies throughout this chapter, not of certain distinct judgments, but of judgment in general, without any special allusions to the way in which it would be realized; so that the proclamation embraces all the judgments that have fallen upon Judah from the Assyrian invasion down to the Roman catastrophe.

#### GUILT AND PUNISHMENT OF ISRAEL. ITS FUTURE RESTORATION.—CHAP. II.

After having prophesied generally in ch. i. of the judgment that would fall upon both kingdoms on account of their apostasy from the living God, Micah proceeds in ch. ii. to condemn, as the principal sins, the injustice and oppressions on the part of the great (vers. 1, 2), for which the nation was to be driven away from its inheritance (vers. 3-5). He then vindicates this threat, as opposed to the prophecies of the false prophets, who confirmed the nation in its ungodliness by the lies that they told (vers. 6-11); and then closes with the brief but definite promise, that the Lord would one day gather together the remnant of His people, and would multiply it greatly, and make it His kingdom (vers. 12, 13). As this promise applies

to all Israel of the twelve tribes, the reproof and threat of punishment are also addressed to the house of Jacob as such (ver. 7), and apply to both kingdoms. There are no valid grounds for restricting them to Judah, even though Micah may have had the citizens of that kingdom more particularly in his mind.

Vers. 1-5. The violent acts of the great men would be punished by God with the withdrawal of the inheritance of His people, or the loss of Canaan. Ver. 1. "*Woe to those who devise mischief, and prepare evil upon their beds! In the light of the morning they carry it out, for their hand is their god.*" Ver. 2. "*They covet fields and plunder them, and houses and take them; and oppress the man and his house, the man and his inheritance.*" The woe applies to the great and mighty of the nation, who by acts of injustice deprive the common people of the inheritance conferred upon them by the Lord (cf. Isa. v. 8). The prophet describes them as those who devise plans by night upon their beds for robbing the poor, and carry them out as soon as the day dawns. תַּשְׁבּ אָמָן denotes the sketching out of plans (see Ps. xxxvi. 5); and תַּעֲלֵ רָע, to work evil, the preparation of the ways and means for carrying out their wicked plans. תַּעֲלֵ, the preparation, is distinguished from עָשָׂה, the execution, as in Isa. xli. 4, for which יָצַר and עָשָׂה are also used (e.g. Isa. xliii. 7). "Upon their beds," i.e. by night, the time of quiet reflection (Ps. iv. 5; cf. Job iv. 13). "By the light of the morning," i.e. at daybreak, without delay. לֹא יִשְׁוּ, lit. "for their hand is for a god," i.e. their power passes as a god to them; they know of no higher power than their own arm; whatever they wish it is in their power to do (cf. Gen. xxxi. 29; Prov. iii. 27; Hab. i. 11; Job xii. 6). Ewald and Rückert weaken the thought by adopting the rendering, "because it stands free in their hand;" and Hitzig's rendering, "if it stands in their hand," is decidedly false. *Kî* cannot be a conditional particle here, because the thought would thereby be weakened in a manner quite irreconcilable with the context. In ver. 2 the evil which they plan by night, and carry out by day, is still more precisely defined. By force and injustice they seize upon the property (fields, houses) of the poor, the possessions which the Lord has given to His people for their inheritance. *Châmad* points to the command against coveting (Ex. xx. 14 (17); cf. Deut. v. 18). The second

half of the verse (ver. 2) contains a conclusion drawn from the first: "and so they practise violence upon the man and his property." *Beth* answers to *bottim*, and *nachălâh* to the *Sădōth*, as their hereditary portion in the land—the portion of land which each family received when Canaan was divided.

Ver. 3. "*Therefore thus saith Jehovah, Behold, I devise evil concerning this family, from which ye shall not withdraw your necks, and not walk loftily, for it is an evil time.*" Ver. 4. "*In that day will men raise against you a proverb, and lament a lamentation. It has come to pass, they say; we are waste, laid waste; the inheritance of my people he exchanges: how does he withdraw it from me! To the rebellious one he divides our field.*" The punishment introduced with *lăkhên* (therefore) will correspond to the sin. Because they reflect upon evil, to deprive their fellow-men of their possessions, Jehovah will bring evil upon this generation, lay a heavy yoke upon their neck, out of which they will not be able to draw their necks, and under which they will not be able to walk loftily, or with extended neck. *הַמִּשְׁפָּחָה הַזֹּאת* is not this godless family, but the whole of the existing nation, whose corrupt members are to be exterminated by the judgment (see Isa. xxix. 20 sqq.). The yoke which the Lord will bring upon them is subjugation to the hostile conqueror of the land and the oppression of exile (see Jer. xxvii. 12). *Hălakh rômâh*, to walk on high, i.e. with the head lifted up, which is a sign of pride and haughtiness. *Rômâh* is different from *קוֹמָמִיּוֹת*, an upright attitude, in Lev. xxvi. 13. *בִּי עֹתָה*, as in Amos v. 13, but in a different sense, is not used of moral depravity, but of the distress which will come upon Israel through the laying on of the yoke. Then will the opponents raise derisive songs concerning Israel, and Israel itself will bewail its misery. The verbs *yissâ'*, *nâhâh*, and *'amar* are used impersonally. *Mâshâl* is not synonymous with *n'hî*, a mournful song (Ros.), but signifies a figurative saying, a proverb-song, as in Isa. xiv. 4, Hab. ii. 6. The subject to *יִשָּׂא* is the opponents of Israel, hence *עַל־יֶכֶם*; on the other hand, the subject to *nâhâh* and *'amar* is the Israelites themselves, as *נִשְׁרָנִי* teaches. *נִהִיָּה* is not a feminine formation from *נִהַי*, a mournful song, *lamentum lamenti*, i.e. a mournfully mournful song, as Rosenmüller, Umbreit, and the earlier commentators suppose; but the *niphāl* of *הָיָה* (cf. Dan. viii. 27): *actum est!* it is all

over!—an exclamation of despair (Le de Dieu, Ewald, etc.); and it is written after 'amar, because נִהְיֶה as an exclamation is equivalent in meaning to an object. The omission of the copula Vav precludes our taking 'amar in connection with what follows (Maurer). The following clauses are a still further explanation of נִהְיֶה: we are quite laid waste. The form נִשְׁרֵי for נִשְׁרֵי is probably chosen simply to imitate the tone of lamentation better (Hitzig). The inheritance of my people, i.e. the land of Canaan, He (Jehovah) changes, i.e. causes it to pass over to another possessor, namely, to the heathen. The words receive their explanation from the clauses which follow: How does He cause (sc. the inheritance) to depart from me! Not how does He cause me to depart. לִשְׁוִיב is not an infinitive, *ad reddendum*, or *restituendum*, which is altogether unsuitable, but *nomen verbale*, the fallen or rebellious one, like שׁוֹכֵבָה in Jer. xxxi. 22, xlix. 4. This is the term applied by mourning Israel to the heathenish foe, to whom Jehovah apportions the fields of His people. The withdrawal of the land is the just punishment for the way in which the wicked great men have robbed the people of their inheritance.

Ver. 5. "Therefore wilt thou have none to cast a measure for the lot in the congregation of Jehovah." With *lākhēn* (therefore) the threat, commenced with *lākhēn* in ver. 3, is resumed and applied to individual sinners. The whole nation is not addressed in אֲנִי, still less the prophet, as Hitzig supposes, but every individual among the tyrannical great men (vers. 1, 2). The singular is used instead of the plural, to make the address more impressive, that no one may imagine that he is excepted from the threatened judgment. For a similar transition from the plural to the singular, see ch. iii. 10. The expression, to cast the measure *b'gōrāl*, i.e. in the nature of a lot (equivalent to for a lot, or as a lot), may be explained on the ground that the land was divided to the Israelites by lot, and then the portion that fell to each tribe was divided among the different families by measure. The words are not to be taken, however, as referring purely to the future, as Caspari supposes, i.e. to the time when the promised land would be divided afresh among the people on their return. For even if the prophet does proclaim in vers. 12, 13 the reassembling of Israel and its restoration to its hereditary land, this thought cannot be

arbitrarily taken for granted here. We therefore regard the words as containing a general threat, that the ungodly will henceforth receive no further part in the inheritance of the Lord, but that they are to be separated from the congregation of Jehovah.

Vers. 6–11. As such a prophecy as this met with violent contradiction, not only from the corrupt great men, but also from the false prophets who flattered the people, Micah indicates it by showing that the people are abusing the long-suffering and mercy of the Lord; and that, by robbing the peaceable poor, the widows, and the orphans, they are bringing about the punishment of banishment out of the land. Ver. 6. "*Drip not (prophecy not), they drip: if they drip not this, the shame will not depart.*" Ver. 7. *Thou, called house of Jacob, is the patience of Jehovah short, then? or is this His doing? Are not my words good to him that walketh uprightly?*" הִפִּיף, to drip, to cause words to flow, used of prophesying, as in Amos vii. 16. The speakers in ver. 6a are not the Jews generally, or the rich oppressors who have just been punished and threatened. The word *yattiphū* does not agree with this, since it does not mean to chatter, but to prophesy, as ver. 11 and also the primary passage Deut. xxxii. 2 show. But Micah could not call the rich men's speaking prophesying. It is rather false prophets who are speaking,—namely, those who in the word '*al-tattiphū* (prophecy not) would prohibit the true prophets from predicting the judgments of the Lord. The second hemistich is rendered by most of the modern commentators, "they are not to chatter (preach) of such things; the reproaches cease not," or "there is no end to reproaching" (Ewald, Hitzig, Maurer, and Caspari). But this is open to the following objections: (1) That הִפִּיף in ver. 11 means to prophesy to a person (not concerning or of anything); (2) that *sūg* or *nāsag* means to depart, not to cease; (3) that even the thought, "the reproaches do not cease," is apparently unsuitable, since Micah could not well call a prohibition against prophesying an incessant reproach; and to this we may add, (4) the grammatical harshness of taking לֹא יִפִּיפוּ as an imperative, and the following לֹא יִפִּנוּ as an indicative (a simple declaration). Still less can the rendering, "they (the true prophets) will not chatter about this, yet the reproach will not depart" (Ros., Rückert), be

vindicated, as such an antithesis as this would necessarily be indicated by a particle. The only course that remains, therefore, is that adopted by C. B. Michaelis and Hengstenberg, viz. to take the words as conditional: if they (the true prophets) do not prophesy to these (the unrighteous rich in vers. 1, 2: Hengstenberg), or on account of these things (Michaelis), the shame will not depart, *i.e.* shameful destruction will burst incessantly upon them. On the absence of the conditional  $\text{אם}$ , see Ewald, p. 357, *b*. Such addresses as these do not please the corrupt great men; but they imagine that such threats are irreconcilable with the goodness of Jehovah. This is the connection of ver. 7, in which the prophet meets the reproach cast upon his threatening words with the remark, that God is not wrathful, and has no love for punishing, but that He is stirred up to wrath by the sins of the nation, and obliged to punish.  $\text{הָאָמַר}$  is not an exclamation, "O, what is said! = O for such talk as this!" (Ewald, Umbreit, Caspari); for it cannot be shown that the participle is ever used in this way, and it cannot be supported from  $\text{הַפִּנְיָה$  in Isa. xxix. 16, especially as here a second vocative would follow. Nor is it a question: "*Num dicendum?* Dare one say this?" (Hitzig.) For although  $\text{הָאָמַר}$  might be an interrogative particle (cf. Ezek. xxviii. 9), the passive participle cannot express the idea of daring, in support of which Hitzig is quite wrong in appealing to Lev. xi. 47 and Ps. xxii. 32.  $\text{הָאָמַר}$  is no doubt a vocative, but it is to be taken in connection with *beth-Ya'aqob*: thou who art called house of Jacob. There is very little force in the objection, that this would have required  $\text{הָאָמַר לְךָ ב'}$ , since  $\text{אָמַר}$ , when used in the sense of being called or being named, is always construed with  $\text{לְ}$  of the person bearing the name. The *part. paül* of *'amar* only occurs here; and although the *niphal*, when used in this sense, is generally construed with  $\text{לְ}$ , the same rule may apply to  $\text{אָמַר}$  as to  $\text{קָרָא}$  in the sense of naming,—namely, that in the passive construction the  $\text{לְ}$  may either be inserted or omitted (cf. Isa. lvi. 7, liv. 5; Deut. iii. 13), and  $\text{הָאָמַר}$  may just as well be used in the sense of *dicta* (*domus*) as  $\text{הַפִּנְיָה$  in Isa. xlviii. 1 in the sense of *vocati* = *qui appellantur*. The whole nation is addressed, although the address points especially to the unrighteous great men. Is Jehovah indeed wrathful? *i.e.* has He not patience, does He not exercise long-suffering? *Qätsar*



*rûāch* must not be explained according to Ex. vi. 9, but according to Prov. xiv. 29. Or are these (*'ēlleh*, the punishments threatened) His deeds? *i.e.* is He accustomed, or does He only like to punish? The answer to these questions, or speaking more correctly, their refutation, follows in the next question, which is introduced with the assuring הִלֵּיךְ, and in which Jehovah speaks: My words deal kindly with him that walks uprightly. The Lord not only makes promises to the upright, but He also grants His blessing. The words of the Lord contain their fulfilment within themselves. In הַיְשָׁר הַלֵּךְ, it is for the sake of emphasis that *yāshâr* stands first, and the article properly belongs to *hōlēkh*; but it is placed before *yāshâr* to bind together the two words into one idea. The reason why the Lord threatens by His prophets is therefore to be found in the unrighteousness of the people.

Ver. 8. "*But yesterday my people rises up as an enemy: off from the garment ye draw the cloak from those who pass by carelessly, averted from war.*" Ver. 9. *The women of my people ye drive away out of the house of their delights; from their children ye take my ornament for ever.*" 'Etlmāl, yesterday, lately, not = long ago, but, as *y'qōmēm* shows, denoting an action that is repeated, equivalent to "again, recently." קִוֵּם is not used here in a causative sense, "to set up," but as an intensified *kal*, to take a standing = to stand up or rise up. The causative view, They set up my people as an enemy (Ewald), yields no fitting sense; and if the meaning were, "My people causes me to rise up as its enemy" (Caspari), the suffixes could not be omitted. If this were the thought, it would be expressed as clearly as in Isa. lxiii. 10. There is no valid ground for altering the text, as Hitzig proposes. It is not stated against whom the people rise up as an enemy, but according to the context it can only be against Jehovah. This is done by robbing the peaceable travellers, as well as the widows and orphans, whereby they act with hostility towards Jehovah and excite His wrath (Ex. xxii. 21 sqq.; Deut. xxvii. 19). שָׁמַל, from before, *i.e.* right away from, the garment. *Salmāl* is the upper garment; אֶדְרֶת = אֶדְרֶת the broad dress-cloak. They take this away from those who pass carelessly by. שָׁבִי is an intransitive participle: averted from the war, averse to conflict, *i.e.* peaceably disposed (see Ps. cxx. 7). We have not

only to think of open highway robbery, but also of their taking away the cloak in the public street from their own poor debtors, when they are walking peaceably along, suspecting nothing, for the purpose of repaying themselves. The "wives of my people" are *widows*, whom they deprive of house and home, and indeed widows of the people of Jehovah, in whose person Jehovah is injured. These children are fatherless orphans (וְיָתֵיבָא with a singular suffix: the children of the widow). *Hādārī*, my ornament, *i.e.* the ornament which I have given them. The reference, as לַעֲנִי shows, is to the garment or upper coat. The expression "for ever" may be explained from the evident allusion to the Mosaic law in Ex. xxii. 25, according to which the coat taken from the poor as a pledge was to be returned before sunset, whereas ungodly creditors retained it for ever.

Such conduct as this must be followed by banishment from the land. Ver. 10. *"Rise up, and go; for this is not the place of rest: because of the defilement which brings destruction, and mighty destruction."* Ver. 11. *"If there were a man, walking after wind, who would lie deceit, 'I will prophesy to thee of wine and strong drink,' he would be a prophet of this people."* The prophet having overthrown in vers. 7-9 the objection to his threatening prophecies, by pointing to the sins of the people, now repeats the announcement of punishment, and that in the form of a summons to go out of the land into captivity, because the land cannot bear the defilement consequent upon such abominations. The passage is based upon the idea contained in Lev. xviii. 25, 28, that the land is defiled by the sins of its inhabitants, and will vomit them out because of this defilement, in connection with such passages as Deut. xii. 9, 10, where coming to Canaan is described as coming to rest. אֶרֶץ (this) refers to the land. This (the land in which ye dwell) is not the place of rest (*hamm'nūchāh*, as in Zech. ix. 1 and Ps. cxxxii. 14). If "*this*" were to be taken as referring to their sinful conduct, in the sense of "*this* does not bring or cause rest," it would be difficult to connect it with what follows, *viz.* "*because of the defilement;*" whereas no difficulty arises if we take "*this*" as referring to the land, which the expression "*rise up and go*" naturally suggests. טָמְאָה = טָמְאָה, defilement; וְיָתֵיבָא is to be taken in a relative sense, "*which brings*

destruction," and is strengthened by חֲבָל, with an explanatory ו: and indeed terrible destruction. חָבַל, *perditio*; and נִמְרָץ as in 1 Kings ii. 8. The destruction consists in the fact that the land vomits out its inhabitants (Lev. xviii. 25). Such prophecies are very unwelcome to the corrupt great men, because they do not want to hear the truth, but simply what flatters their wicked heart. They would like to have only prophets who prophesy lies to them. הוֹלֵךְ רֵחַ, walking after the wind; the construction is the same as הוֹלֵךְ צִדְקוֹת in Isa. xxxiii. 15, and *rūdch* is a figure signifying what is vain or worthless, as in Isa. xxvi. 18, xli. 29, etc. The words אֶפְסֵיךָ לִי וְגו' are the words of a false prophet: I prophesy to thee with regard to wine. The meaning is not "that there will be an abundant supply of wine," or "that the wine will turn out well" (Rosenmüller and others); but wine and strong drink (for *shēkhār*, see Delitzsch on Isa. v. 11) are figures used to denote earthly blessings and sensual enjoyments, and the words refer to such promises as Lev. xxvi. 4, 5, 10, Deut. xxviii. 4, 11, Joel ii. 24, iv. 18 sqq., which false prophets held out to the people without any regard to their attitude towards God. "This people," because the great men represent the nation. With this explanation pointing back to ver. 6, the threatening is brought to a close.

In vers. 12, 13 there follows, altogether without introduction, the promise of the future reassembling of the people from their dispersion. Ver. 12. *"I will assemble, assemble thee all together, O Jacob; gather together, gather together the remnant of Israel; I will bring him together like the sheep of Bozrah, like a flock in the midst of their pasture: they will be noisy with men."* Ver. 13. *"The breaker through comes up before them; they break through, and pass along through the gate, and go out by it; and their King goes before them, and Jehovah at their head."* Micah is indeed not a prophet, prophesying lies of wine and strong drink; nevertheless he also has salvation to proclaim, only not for the morally corrupt people of his own time. They will be banished out of the land; but the captivity and dispersion are not at an end. For the remnant of Israel, for the nation when sifted and refined by the judgments, the time will come when the Lord will assemble them again, miraculously multiply them, and redeem them as their King, and lead them home. The sudden and abrupt transition from threatening to promise, just

as in Hos. ii. 2, vi. 1, xi. 9, has given rise to this mistaken supposition, that vers. 12, 13 contain a prophecy uttered by the lying prophets mentioned in ver. 10 (Abenezra, Mich., Ewald, etc.). But this supposition founders not only on the *שְׂאֲרֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל*, inasmuch as the gathering together of the remnant of Israel presupposes the carrying away into exile, but also on the entire contents of these verses. Micah could not possibly introduce a false prophet as speaking in the name of Jehovah, and saying, "I will gather;" such a man would at the most have said, "Jehovah will gather." Nor could he have put a true prophecy like that contained in vers. 12, 13 into the mouth of such a man. For this reason, not only Hengstenberg, Caspari, and Umbreit, but even Maurer and Hitzig, have rejected this assumption; and the latter observes, among other things, quite correctly, that "the idea expressed here is one common to the true prophets (see Hos. ii. 2), which Micah himself also utters in ch. iv. 6." The emphasis lies upon the assembling, and hence *אִסְּפוּ* and *אֶקְבֹּץ* are strengthened by infinitive absolutes. But the assembling together presupposes a dispersion among the heathen, such as Micah has threatened in ch. i. 11, 16, ii. 4. And the Lord will gather together all Jacob, not merely a portion, and yet only the remnant of Israel. This involves the thought, that the whole nation of the twelve tribes, or of the two kingdoms, will be reduced to a remnant by the judgment. *Jacob* and *Israel* are identical epithets applied to the whole nation, as in ch. i. 5, and the two clauses of the verse are synonymous, so that *יַעֲקֹב בִּקְלָה* coincides in actual fact with *שְׂאֲרֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל*. The further description rests upon the fact of the leading of Israel out of Egypt, which is to be renewed in all that is essential at a future time. The following clauses also predict the miraculous multiplication of the remnant of Israel (see Hos. ii. 1, 2; Jer. xxxi. 10), as experienced by the people in the olden time under the oppression of Egypt (Ex. i. 12). The comparison to the flock of Bozrah presupposes that Bozrah's wealth in flocks was well known. Now, as the wealth of the Moabites in flocks of sheep is very evident from 2 Kings iii. 4, many have understood by *בְּצִרְה* not the Edomitish Bozrah, but the Moabitish Bostra (e.g. Hengstenberg). Others, again, take *bostráh* as an appellative noun in the sense of hurdle or fold (see Hitzig, Caspari, and Dietrich

in Ges. *Lex.* after the Chaldee). But there is not sufficient ground for either. The Bostra situated in the Hauran does not occur at all in the Old Testament, not even in Jer. xlviii. 24, and the appellative meaning of the word is simply postulated for this particular passage. That the Edomites were also rich in flocks of sheep is evident from Isa. xxxiv. 6, where the massacre which Jehovah will inflict upon Edom and Bozrah is described as a sacrificial slaughtering of lambs, he-goats, rams, and oxen; a description which presupposes the wealth of Bozrah in natural flocks. The comparison which follows, "like a flock in the midst of its pasture," belongs to the last verse, and refers to the multiplication, and to the noise made by a densely packed and numerous flock. The same tumult will be made by the assembled Israelites on account of the multitude of the men. For the article in *הַרְבֵּרוֹ*, which is already determined by the suffix, see at Josh. vii. 21. In ver. 13 the redemption of Israel out of exile is depicted under the figure of liberation from captivity. Was Egypt a slave-house (ch. vi. 4; cf. Ex. xx. 2); so is exile a prison with walls and gates, which must be broken through. *הַפִּירֵן*, the breaker through, who goes before them, is not Jehovah, but, as the counterpart of Moses the leader of Israel out of Egypt, the captain appointed by God for His people, answering to the head which they are said to choose for themselves in Hos. ii. 2, a second Moses, viz. Zerubbabel, and in the highest sense Christ, who opens the prison-doors, and redeems the captives of Zion (*vid.* Isa. xlii. 7). Led by him, they break through the walls, and march through the gate, and go out through it out of the prison. "The three verbs, they break through, they march through, they go out, describe in a pictorial manner progress which cannot be stopped by any human power" (Hengstenberg). Their King Jehovah goes before them at their head (the last two clauses of the verse are synonymous). Just as Jehovah went before Israel as the angel of the Lord in the pillar of cloud and fire at the exodus from Egypt (Ex. xiii. 21), so at the future redemption of the people of God will Jehovah go before them as King, and lead the procession (see Isa. lii. 12).

The fulfilment of this prophecy commenced with the gathering together of Israel to its God and King by the preaching of

the gospel, and will be completed at some future time when the Lord shall redeem Israel, which is now pining in dispersion, out of the fetters of its unbelief and life of sin. We must not exclude all allusion to the deliverance of the Jewish nation out of the earthly Babylon by Cyrus; at the same time, it is only in its typical significance that this comes into consideration at all,—namely, as a preliminary stage and pledge of the redemption to be effected by Christ out of the spiritual Babylon of this world.

## II. ZION'S DEEPEST DEGRADATION AND HIGHEST EXALTATION.—CHAP. III.—V.

The prophet's second address is of a predominantly Messianic character. The announcement of the utter desolation of Zion on account of the corruption of both the civil rulers and the spiritual leaders of the nation, with which this address opens in ch. iii., serves to a certain extent simply as a foil for the prophecy which follows in ch. iv. and v. of the salvation with which the remnant of Israel, that has been rescued throughout the judgment, will be blessed in the future. This salvation is depicted first of all in all its fulness (ch. iv. 1-7); then in its gradual development, in the re-erection of the former dominion of the daughter of Zion, by her redemption out of Babylon, and her victory over the powers of the world (ch. iv. 8-14); and lastly, in its realization by the Ruler proceeding out of Bethlehem, and by the power and blessing of His rule (ch. v.).

## SINS OF THE LEADERS OF THE NATION, AND DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.—CHAP. III.

The threatening of punishment contained in this chapter is specially directed against the heads and leaders of Israel, and proclaims, in three strophes of four verses each, (*a*) to the princes, who turn right into wrong and flay the people (vers. 1-4), and (*b*) to the false prophets, who lead the people astray, and confirm them in their sin by lying prophecies of peace

(vers. 5-8), retribution for their wicked conduct; and (c) to all three classes of the divinely-appointed chiefs of the nation—the princes, the priests, and the prophets—the destruction of Jerusalem, and the turning of Zion and the temple mountain into a ploughed field and wooded heights on account of their degeneracy (vers. 9-12).

Vers. 1-4. First strophe.—Ver. 1. *“And I said, Hear ye, O heads of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel: Is it not for you to know the right?”* Ver. 2. *Ye who hate good, and love evil; who draw off their skin from them, and their flesh from their bones.* Ver. 3. *And who have eaten the flesh of my people, and stripped off their skin from them; and broken their bones, and cut them in pieces, as if in the pot, and like flesh in the midst of the caldron.* Ver. 4. *Then will they cry to Jehovah, and He will not hearken; and let Him hide His face from them at the same time, as they have made their actions evil.”* By the expression “And I said” (*vá’ōmar*), the following address is indicated as a continuation of the preceding one. The reproofs of this chapter are also a still further expansion of the woe pronounced in ch. ii. 1, 2 upon the godless chiefs of the nation. The heads of Jacob are addressed, that is to say, the princes of the tribes and families of Israel, and the *q’tsinim*, lit. deciders (answering to the Arabic قاضي, a judge) of the house of Israel,

i.e. the heads of families and households, upon whom the administration of justice devolved (cf. Isa. i. 10, xxii. 3). הָלוּא לָכֶם, is it not your duty and your office to know justice? *Da’ath* is practical knowledge, which manifests itself in practice; *mishpāt*, the public administration of justice. Instead of this, they do the opposite. The description of this conduct is appended by participles, in the form of apposition to the heads and princes addressed in ver. 1. Hating good and loving evil refer to the disposition, and indicate the radical corruption of these men. רָעָה, generally misfortune, here evil; hence the Masoretes have altered it into רָע; but the very fact that it deviates from the ordinary rule shows that it is the original word. Instead of administering justice to the people, they take off their skin, and tear the flesh from the bones. The suffixes attached to עוֹרָם and שָׁאֲרָם point back to בֵּית־יִשְׂרָאֵל in ver. 1. The words answer to the German expression, “to pull the skin over the ears.” In

ver. 3 the expression is still stronger ; but the address is continued in the form of a simple description, and instead of the participles, אָשֵׁר is used with the finite verb. They not only slay the people, *i.e.* rob them of all their means of subsistence, but even devour them—treat them like cattle, which men first of all slay, then break their bones, cut the flesh into pieces, and boil it in the pot. In this figure, which is carried out into the most minute details, we must not give any special meaning to the particular features, such as that “the skin, and boiling portions, which are cut up and put into the pot, are figures signifying the pledged clothing and coveted fields (ii. 2, 8).” The prophet paints in very glaring colours, to make an impression upon the ungodly. Therefore, in the time of judgment, God will not hear their crying to Him for help, but will hide His face from them, *i.e.* withdraw His mercy from them. וְנִסְתָּר and וְנִסְתָּר point back to the evil time announced in ch. ii. 3. For ver. 4a, compare Prov. i. 28. *V'yastēr* in ver. 4b is an optative. The prophet continues the announcement of the punishment in the form of a desire. כַּכֵּן, as = according to the way in which, as in 1 Sam. xxviii. 18, Num. xxvii. 14, etc., *i.e.* answering to their evil doings.

Vers. 5-8. In the second strophe, Micah turns from the godless princes and judges to the prophets who lead the people astray, with whom he contrasts the true prophets and their ways. Ver. 5. *“Thus saith Jehovah concerning the prophets who lead my people astray, who bite with their teeth, and preach peace ; and whoever should put nothing into their mouths, against him they sanctify war. Ver. 6. Therefore night to you because of the visions, and darkness to you because of the soothsaying ! and the sun will set over the prophets, and the day blacken itself over them. Ver. 7. And the seers will be ashamed, and the soothsayers blush, and all cover their beard, because (there is) no answer of God. Ver. 8. But I, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of Jehovah, and with judgment and strength, to show to Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin.”* As the first strophe attaches itself to ch. ii. 1, 2, so does the second to ch. ii. 6 and 11, carrying out still further what is there affirmed concerning the false prophets. Micah describes them as people who predict peace and prosperity for a morsel of bread, and thereby lead the people astray, setting before them prosperity



and salvation, instead of preaching repentance to them, by charging them with their sins. Thus they became accomplices of the wicked rulers, with whom they are therefore classed in ver. 11, together with the wicked priests. הַפְּתִיעִים, *leading astray* (cf. Isa. iii. 12, ix. 15) my people, namely, by failing to charge them with their sins, and preach repentance, as the true prophets do, and predicting prosperity for bread and payment. The words, "who bite with their teeth," are to be connected closely with the next clause, "and they preach peace," in the sense of "who preach peace if they can bite with their teeth," *i.e.* if they receive something to bite (or eat). This explanation, which has already been expressed by the Chaldee, is necessarily required by the antithesis, "but whoever puts nothing into their mouth," *i.e.* gives them nothing to eat, notwithstanding the fact that in other passages *nāshakh* only signifies to bite, in the sense of to wound, and is the word generally applied to the bite of a snake (Amos v. 19; Gen. xlix. 17; Num. xxi. 6, 8). If, however, we understand the biting with the teeth as a figurative representation of the words of the prophets who always preach prosperity, and of the injury they do to the real welfare of the people (Ros., Casp., and others), the obvious antithesis of the two double clauses of ver. 5b is totally destroyed. The harsh expression, to "bite with the teeth," in the sense of "to eat," is perfectly in harmony with the harsh words of vers. 2 and 3. *Qiddēsh mil-chāmāh*, to sanctify war, *i.e.* to preach a holy war (cf. Joel iv. 9), or, in reality, to proclaim the vengeance of God. For this shall night and darkness burst upon them. Night and darkness denote primarily the calamity which would come upon the false prophets (*unto you*) in connection with the judgment (ch. ii. 4). The sun which sets to them is the sun of salvation or prosperity (Amos viii. 9; Jer. xv. 9); and the day which becomes black over them is the day of judgment, which is darkness, and not light (Amos v. 18). This calamity is heightened by the fact that they will then stand ashamed, because their own former prophecies are thereby proved to be lies, and fresh, true prophecies fail them, because God gives no answer. "Convicted by the result, they are thus utterly put to shame, because God does not help them out of their trouble by any word of revelation" (Hitzig). *Bōsh*, to be ashamed, when

connected with *châphêr* (cf. Jer. xv. 9; Ps. xxxv. 26 sqq., etc.), signifies to become pale with shame; *châphêr*, to blush, with *min causæ*, to denote the thing of which a man is ashamed. *Qôs'mim* (diviners) alternates with *chōzīm* (seers), because these false prophets had no visions of God, but only divinations out of their own hearts. 'Atâh *sâphâm*: to cover the beard, i.e. to cover the face up to the nose, is a sign of mourning (Lev. xiii. 45), here of trouble and shame (cf. Ezek. xxiv. 17), and is really equivalent to covering the head (Jer. xiv. 4; Esth. vi. 12). *Ma'ânêh*, the construct state of the substantive, but in the sense of the participle; some codd. have indeed מַעֲנֶה. In ver. 8 Micah contrasts himself and his own doings with these false prophets, as being filled with power by the Spirit of Jehovah (i.e. through His assistance) and with judgment. *Mishpât*, governed by שֹׁפֵט, is the divine justice which the prophet has to proclaim, and *g'bhûrâh* strength, manliness, to hold up before the people their sins and the justice of God. In this divine strength he can and must declare their unrighteousness to all ranks of the people, and predict the punishment of God (vers. 9-12).

Vers. 9-12. Third strophe.—Ver. 9. "*Hear this, I pray, O ye heads of the house of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel, who abhor right, and bend all that is straight.*" Ver. 10. "*Building Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with wickedness.*" Ver. 11. "*Their heads, they judge for reward; and their priests, they teach for hire; and their prophets, they divine for money, and lean upon Jehovah, saying, Is not Jehovah among us? evil will not come upon us.*" With the words "Hear this, I pray," the address returns to its starting-point in ver. 1, but only to announce to the leaders of the people the threat of punishment for which the way has been prepared by vers. 2-7. To this end their God-forgetting conduct is briefly summed up once more in vers. 10, 11. The summons to hear is really attached to the end of ver. 8. They are to hear the sin of Jacob (vers. 9-11); but they are also to hear the punishment for their sin, to which the word "this" points. The civil rulers only are addressed in ver. 9,—namely, those who were charged with the administration of justice and of the affairs of the state, but who did the very opposite, who abhorred justice, and made the straight crooked, because they passed sentence for bribes (ver. 11).

They thereby build Zion with blood, etc., *i.e.* obtain the means of erecting splendid buildings by cruel extortions, and partly also by actual judicial murders, as Ahab (1 Kings xxi. compared with Mic. vi. 16), and after him Jehoiakim, had done (Jer. xxii. 13-17). The Chaldeans built with blood in a different sense (Hab. ii. 12). The participle *bōneh* (building) is also in apposition to *rā'shē bēth* (heads of the house, etc.), and the singular without the article is to be taken collectively. They do not, however, truly build the city by this, they simply labour for its destruction (ver. 12). But before saying this, Micah once more sums up briefly all the sins of the leading ranks. The teaching of the priests for reward refers to the fact that they had to give instruction as to the ritual requirements of the law, and were to do this gratuitously (cf. Lev. x. 11; Deut. xvii. 11, xxxiii. 10), and that in disputed cases the judges were to pronounce sentence accordingly. At the same time, these men (not the prophets merely, but also the priests and the heads of the nation as the administrators of justice) placed their reliance upon Jehovah, upon the assurance that He was in the midst of them enthroned in His temple at Jerusalem, and that He would protect the city and its inhabitants from misfortune, without ever reflecting that Jehovah as the Holy One demands sanctification of life, and exterminates the sinners out of His people.

Ver. 12. "*Therefore will Zion for your sake be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem become stone heaps, and the mountain of the house become forest heights.*" *Lākhēn* (therefore) applies primarily to ver. 11, directing the threat of punishment by *בְּיָמֶיךָ* to all the sinners mentioned there; but it also points back to vers. 9, 10, expressing what is there indicated by "this." Zion is not "the site on which the city stood," or Jerusalem, "the mass of houses in the city," as Maurer and Caspari suppose; but Zion is that portion of the city which contained the royal palace, and Jerusalem the rest of the city (cf. ch. iv. 8). The mountain of the house, *i.e.* the temple hill, is also specially mentioned, for the purpose of destroying all false trust in the temple (cf. Jer. vii. 4). The predicates are divided rhetorically, and the thought is this: the royal palace, the city, and the temple shall be so utterly destroyed, that of all the houses and palaces only heaps of rubbish will remain,

and the ground upon which the city stood will be partly used as a ploughed field, and partly overgrown with bushes (cf. Isa. xxxii. 13, 14). On *sâdeh* as an accusative of effect (as a field = becoming a field), see Ewald, § 281, *e*; and for the plural form *רָצָה*, see Ewald, § 177, *a*. *Habbayith* (the house) is probably chosen intentionally instead of *bēth Y'hōvâh* (the house of Jehovah), because the temple ceased to be the dwelling-place of Jehovah as soon as it was destroyed. Hence in Ezekiel (x. 18 sqq., xi. 22 sqq.) the Schechinah departs before the Babylonians destroy it. With regard to the fulfilment of this threat, see the points discussed at ch. iv. 10.

GLORIFICATION OF THE HOUSE OF THE LORD, AND RESTORATION OF THE DOMINION OF ZION.—CHAP. IV.

Zion will eventually be exalted from the deepest degradation to the highest glory. This fundamental thought of the announcement of salvation contained in ch. iv. and v. is carried out thus far in ch. iv.: the first section (vers. 1-7) depicts the glorification of the temple mountain by the streaming of the heathen nations to it to hear the law of the Lord, and the blessing which Israel and the nations will derive therefrom; and the second section (vers. 8-14) describes the restoration of the dominion of Zion from its fallen condition through the redemption of the nation out of Babel, and its victorious conflict with the nations of the world.

Vers. 1-5. The promise of salvation opens, in closest connection with the destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple, with a picture of the glory awaiting in the remotest future the temple mountain, which has now become a wild forest-height. Ver. 1. *“And it comes to pass at the end of the days, that the mountain of Jehovah’s house will be established on the head of the mountains, and it will be exalted above the hills, and nations stream to it. Ver. 2. And many nations go, and say, Up, let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, and to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us of His ways, and we may walk in His paths: for from Zion will law go forth, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem. Ver. 3. And He will judge between many nations, and pronounce sentence on strong nations afar off; and they forge their swords into coulter, and their spears into*

*pruning-hooks : nation will not lift up sword against nation, nor will they learn war any more.* Ver. 4. *And they will sit, every one under his vine, and under his fig-tree, and no one will make them afraid : for the mouth of Jehovah of hosts hath spoken it.*<sup>1</sup> By the phrase "at the end of the days," which always denotes the Messianic era when used by the prophets (see at Hos. iii. 5), the predicted exaltation of the temple mountain is assigned to the period of the completion of the kingdom of God. The mountain of the house of Jehovah is the temple mountain, strictly speaking, Moriah, as the distinction made between the mountain of the house and Zion in ch. iii. 12 clearly shows; but as a subordinate peak of Zion, it is embraced along with Zion in what follows (compare ver. 2 with ver. 7) as the seat of Jehovah's rule, from which the law proceeds. נָבִלָה does not mean placed or set up, but established, founded. By connecting the participle with יְהוֹיָה, the founding is designated as a permanent one. בְּרֹאשׁ הָהָרִים, upon (not at) the top of the mountains, as in Judg. ix. 7, 1 Sam. xxvi. 13, Ps. lxxii. 16; whereas such passages as ch. ii. 13, Amos vi. 7, and 1 Kings xxi. 9 are of a different character, and have no bearing upon the point. The temple mountain, or Zion, will be so exalted above all the mountains and hills, that it will appear to be founded upon the top of the mountains. This exaltation is of course not a physical one, as Hofmann, Drechsler, and several of the Rabbins suppose, but a spiritual (ethical) elevation above all the mountains. This is obvious from ver. 2, according to which Zion will tower above all the mountains, because the law of the Lord issues from it. The assumption of a physical elevation cannot be established from Ezek. xl. 2 and Rev. xxi. 10, for in the visions described in both these passages the earthly elevation is a symbol of a spiritual one. "Through a new revelation of the Lord, which is made upon it, and which leaves the older revelations far behind, whether made upon Sinai or upon itself, Zion becomes the greatest and loftiest

<sup>1</sup> This promise is placed by Isaiah (ch. ii. 2-4) at the head of his prophecy of Zion's way through judgment from the false glory to the true. The originality of the passage in Micah is open to no question. Delitzsch acknowledges this, and has given the principal arguments in its favour in the *Commentary on Isaiah*. For still more elaborate proofs, see Caspari's *Micah*, pp. 444-5.

mountain in the world" (Caspari), and the mountain seen from afar, to which "nations" stream, and not merely the one nation of Israel. עַמִּים is more precisely defined in ver. 2 as גוֹיִם רַבִּים. The attractive power which this mountain exerts upon the nations, so that they call upon one another to go up to it (ver. 2), does not reside in its height, which towers above that of all other mountains, but in the fact that the house of the God of Jacob stands upon it, i.e. that Jehovah is enthroned there, and teaches how to walk in His ways. הוֹרֶה מֶן, to teach out of the ways, so that the ways of God form the material from which they derive continual instruction. The desire for salvation, therefore, is the motive which prompts them to this pilgrimage; for they desire instruction in the ways of the Lord, that they may walk in them. The ways of Jehovah are the ways which God takes in His dealing with men, and by which men are led by Him; in reality, therefore, the ordinances of salvation which He has revealed in His word, the knowledge and observance of which secure life and blessedness. The words "for the law goes forth from Zion," etc., are words spoken not by the nations, but by the prophet, and assign the reason why the heathen go with such zeal to the mountain of Jehovah. The accent is laid upon מִצִּיּוֹן (from Zion), which stands at the head, and מִיְרוּשָׁלַם (from Jerusalem), which is parallel to it. Thence does *tōrāh*, i.e. instruction in the ways of God, proceed,—in other words, the law as the rule of a godly life,—and *d'ḥar Y'hōvāh* (the word of Jehovah), or the word of revelation as the source of salvation. It is evident from this that the mountain of the house of God is not thought of here as the place of worship, but as the scene of divine revelation, the centre of the kingdom of God. Zion is the source of the law and word of the Lord, from which the nations draw instruction how to walk in the ways of God, to make it their own, take it to their homes, and walk according to it. The fruit of this adoption of the word of the Lord will be, that they will no longer fight out their disputes with weapons of war, but let Jehovah judge and settle them, and thus acknowledge Him as their King and Judge. שָׁפֵט signifies to act as judge; הוֹרֶה (lit. to set right), to settle and put a stop to a dispute. "Many nations," in contrast with the one nation, which formerly was alone in acknowledging Jehovah as its King and Judge. This is strengthened still further by the parallel

"strong, mighty nations afar off." In consequence of this they will turn their weapons into instruments of peaceful agriculture, and wage no more war; in fact, they will learn war no more, no longer exercise themselves in the use of arms. For the words 'וְכִתְּרוּ וְנָתַתִּי compare Joel iv. 10, where the summons to the nations to a decisive conflict with the kingdom of God is described as turning the instruments of agriculture into weapons of war. With the cessation of war, universal peace will ensue, and Israel will have no further enemies to fear, so that every one will have undisturbed enjoyment of the blessings of peace, of which Israel had had a foretaste during the peaceful reign of Solomon. The words "sit under his vine" are taken from 1 Kings v. 5 (cf. Zech. iii. 10), and אֵין כְּתִירִיר from the promise in Lev. xxvi. 6. All this, however incredible it might appear, not only for the Israel of that time, but even now under the Christian dispensation, will assuredly take place, for the mouth of Jehovah the true God has spoken it.

It will not be through any general humanitarian ideas and efforts, however, that the human race will reach this goal, but solely through the omnipotence and faithfulness of the Lord. The reason assigned for the promise points to this. Ver. 5. "*For all nations walk every man in the name of his God, but we walk in the name of Jehovah our God for ever and ever.*" This verse does not contain an exhortation, or a resolution to walk in the name of God, which involves an exhortation, in the sense of "if all nations walk, etc., then we will," etc.; for an admonition or a resolution neither suits the connection, in the midst of simple promises, nor the words themselves, since we should at any rate expect נִלְכֶּה instead of נִלְכֶּה. The sameness in the form of the verbs נִלְכֶּה and נִלְכֶּה requires that they should be understood in the same way. Walking in the name of God does not mean regulating the conduct according to the name of a God, *i.e.* according to the nature which expresses itself in the name, or worshipping him in a manner corresponding to his nature (Caspari), but walking in the strength of God, in which the nature of this God is displayed. This is the meaning of the phrase in 1 Sam. xvii. 45 and Zech. x. 12, where "I strengthen them in Jehovah" forms the basis of "and in His name will they walk" (compare Prov. xviii. 10, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower"). But the gods of all the nations,

*i.e.* of all the heathen, are worthless beings, without life, without strength. Jehovah, on the contrary, is the only true God, the almighty Creator and Governor of the world. And the heathen, with their worthless gods, can do nothing to Him and the nation which walks in His name, His strength. If, therefore, Israel rejoices for ever and ever in the strength of its God, the heathen nations cannot disturb the peace which He will create for Israel and all who accept His word. In this way is the promise in vers. 3 and 4 explained in ver. 5. But this explanation assumes that, even at the time when many nations stream to the mountain of the Lord, there will still be nations that do not seek Jehovah and His word,—a thought which is still further expanded in ch. v. 4 sqq., and involves this consolation, that such opponents of the people of God as shall be still in existence will not be able to interfere with the salvation which has been prepared for it by its God.

Vers. 6, 7. From this salvation even the Israel that may be in misery or scattered abroad will not be excluded. Ver. 6. *"In that day, is the saying of Jehovah, will I assemble that which limps, and gather together that which has been thrust out, and which I have afflicted."* Ver. 7. *"And I will make that which limps into a remnant, and that which is far removed into a strong nation; and Jehovah will rule over them from henceforth, even for ever."* "In that day" points back to the end of the days in ver. 1. At the time when many nations shall go on pilgrimage to the highly exalted mountain of the Lord, and therefore Zion-Jerusalem will not only be restored, but greatly glorified, the Lord will assemble that which limps and is scattered abroad. The feminines *הַלְלָהּ* and *הַפְדָּתָהּ* are neuters, and to be understood collectively. Limping denotes the miserable condition into which the dispersed have been brought (cf. Ps. xxxv. 15, xxxviii. 18). And this misery is inflicted by God. The limping and dispersed are those whom Jehovah has afflicted, whom He has punished for their sins. The gathering together of the nation has already been promised in ch. ii. 12; but there the assembling of all Israel was foretold, whereas here it is merely the assembling of the miserable, and of those who are scattered far and wide. There is no discrepancy in these two promises. The difference may easily be explained from the different tendencies of the two addresses. "All Jacob" referred to the two



separate kingdoms into which the nation was divided in the time of the prophet, viz. Israel and Judah, and it was distinctly mentioned there, because the banishment of both had been foretold. This antithesis falls into the background here; and, on the other hand, prominence is given, in connection with what precedes, to the idea of happiness in the enjoyment of the blessings of the holy land. The gathering together involves reinstatement in the possession and enjoyment of these blessings. Hence only the miserable and dispersed are mentioned, to express the thought that no one is to be excluded from the salvation which the Lord will bestow upon His people in the future, though now he may be pining in the misery of the exile inflicted upon them. But just as the whole of the nation of Israel to be gathered together, according to ch. ii. 12, consists of the remnant of the nation only, so does the gathering together referred to here point only to the restoration of the remnant, which is to become a strong nation, over which Jehovah reigns as King in Zion. מֶלֶךְ is emphatic, expressing the setting up of the perfected monarchy, as it has never yet existed, either in the present or the past.<sup>1</sup> This dominion will never be interrupted again, as it formerly was, by the banishment of the nation into exile on account of its sins, but will endure עַדְעַד (henceforth), i.e. from the future, which is regarded as present, even for ever.

So far as the realization of this exceedingly glorious promise is concerned, the expression standing at the head, *b<sup>o</sup>achārith hayyāmim* (at the end of the days), already points to the Messianic times; and the substance of the promise itself points to the times of the completion of the Messianic kingdom, i.e. to the establishment of the kingdom of glory (Matt. xix. 28). The temple mountain is a type of the kingdom of God in its New Testament form, which is described by all the prophets

<sup>1</sup> "Micah does not mention the descendants of David here, but Jehovah Himself, not to exclude the kingdom of David, but to show that God will prove that He was the author of that kingdom, and that all the power is His. For although God governed the ancient people by the hand of David, and by the hand of Josiah and Hezekiah, yet there was as it were a cloud interposed, so that God then reigned obscurely. The prophet therefore indicates a certain difference here between that shadowy kingdom and the new kingdom which God will openly manifest at the advent of the Messiah."

—CALVIN.

after the forms of the Old Testament kingdom of God. Accordingly, the going of the nations to the mountain of the house of Jehovah is, as a matter of fact, the entrance of the heathen who have been brought to the faith into the kingdom of Christ. This commenced with the spread of the gospel among the Gentiles, and has been continued through all the ages of the Christian church. But however many nations have hitherto entered into the Christian church, the time has not yet come for them to be so entirely pervaded with the spirit of Christ, as to allow their disputes to be settled by the Lord as their King, or to renounce war, and live in everlasting peace. Even for Israel the time has not yet come for the limping and exiled to be gathered together and made into a strong nation, however many individual Jews have already found salvation and peace within the bosom of the Christian church. The cessation of war and establishment of eternal peace can only take place after the destruction of all the ungodly powers on earth, at the return of Christ to judgment and for the perfecting of His kingdom. But even then, when, according to Rom. xi. 25 sqq., the *pleroma* of the Gentiles shall have entered into the kingdom of God, and Israel as a nation ( $\pi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma \text{ Ἰσραήλ}$  =  $\text{לְכָל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל}$  in ch. ii. 12) shall have turned to its Redeemer, and shall be assembled or saved, no physical elevation of the mountain of Zion will ensue, nor any restoration of the temple in Jerusalem, or return of the dispersed of Israel to Palestine. The kingdom of glory will be set up on the new earth, in the Jerusalem which was shown to the holy seer on Patmos in the Spirit, on a great and lofty mountain (Rev. xxi. 10). In this holy city of God there will be no temple, "for the Lord, the Almighty God, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof" (Rev. xxi. 22). The word of the Lord to the Samaritan woman concerning the time when men would neither worship God on this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, but worship Him in spirit and in truth (John iv. 21, 23), applies not only to the kingdom of God in its temporal development into the Christian church, but also to the time of the completion of the kingdom of God in glory.

Vers. 8-10. The prophecy turns from the highest glorification of Zion to the throne of Zion, which had been founded by David, and swept away with the destruction of Jerusalem (ch. iii. 12), and predicts its restoration in the future. Conse-

quently the reign of Jehovah upon Mount Zion, promised in ver. 7, is still further defined as effected through the medium of the Davidico-Messianic dominion. Ver. 8. "*And thou flock-tower, hill of the daughter Zion, to thee will the former dominion reach and come, the reign over the daughter Jerusalem.*" This announcement is attached primarily to vers. 6 and 7. As the remnant of Israel gathered together out of the dispersion will become a strong nation, so shall the reign of the daughter Zion be also restored. The address to the flock-tower, the hill of the daughter Zion, shows that these two notions express the same thing, looked at from two sides, or with two different bearings, so that the flock-tower is more precisely defined as the "hill of the daughter Zion." Now, as the daughter Zion is the city of Zion personified as a virgin, the hill of the daughter Zion might be understood as denoting the hill upon which the city stood, *i.e.* Mount Zion. But this is precluded by Isa. xxxii. 14, where hill and watch-tower (*'ophel vâbhachan*) are mentioned in parallelism with the palace (*'armôn*), as places or buildings which are to serve as dens for ever. From this it is obvious that *'ophel* was a place either at the side or at the top of Zion. If we compare with this 2 Chron. xxvii. 3 and xxxiii. 14, according to which Jotham built much against the wall of the Ophel (*hâ'ophel*), and Manasseh encircled the Ophel with a wall, and made it very high, Ophel must have been a hill, possibly a bastion, on the south-eastern border of Zion, the fortification of which was of great importance as a defence to the city of Zion against hostile attacks.<sup>1</sup> Consequently *migdal-*

<sup>1</sup> The opinion that Ophel is the whole of the southern steep rocky promontory of Moriah, from the southern end of the temple ground to its extreme point (Robinson, Schultz, Williams), viz. the *Ophla* or *Ophlas* of Josephus, as Arnold (Herzog's *Cycl.*) and Winer (*Bibl. R. W.*) suppose, would be in perfect harmony with this. At the same time, all that can be inferred with any certainty from the passages from Josephus which are cited in support of it (viz. *Wars of the Jews*, v. 6, 1; cf. vi. 6, 3 and v. 4, 2) is, that the place called *Ophla* was in the neighbourhood of the valley of Kidron and of the temple mountain. The question then arises, whether the *Ophla* of Josephus is identical with the Ophel of the Old Testament, since Josephus does not mention the Ophel in his list of the hills of Jerusalem, but simply mentions *Ophla* as a special locality (see Ireland, *Pal.* p. 855). And lastly, the situation of the *Ophel*, upon which the Nethinim dwelt (Neh. iii. 26), is still a matter of dispute, Bertheau supposing it to be the habitable space to the east of the eastern side of the temple area.

'eder cannot be the flock-tower in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem, which is mentioned in Gen. xxxv. 21, but can only be a (or rather the) tower of the Davidic palace, or royal castle upon Zion, namely the town mentioned in Neh. iii. 25, which stood out against the upper king's house, by the court of the prison (cf. ver. 26). For the prison, which also belonged to the king's house, according to Jer. xxxii. 2, formed a portion of the royal castle, according to the custom of the East. And that it had a lofty tower, is evident from Song of Sol. iv. 4: "Thy neck is like David's tower, built for an armoury: a thousand shields hang thereon, all heroes' weapons;" according to which the tower of the royal castle was ornamented with the weapons or shields of David's heroes (1 Chron. xii. 1). And the tower of the king's castle was so far specially adapted to represent the sovereignty of David, "that by its exaltation above Zion and Jerusalem, by the fact that it ruled the whole city, it symbolized the Davidic family, and its rule over the city and all Israel" (Caspari). This tower, which is most likely the one called *bachan* (the watch-tower) in Isaiah (*l.c.*), is called by Micah the flock-tower, probably as a play upon the flock-tower by which the patriarch Jacob once pitched his tent, because David, the ancestor of the divinely-chosen royal house, had been called from being the shepherd of a flock to be the shepherd of the nation of Israel, the flock of Jehovah (Jer. xiii. 17; cf. 2 Sam. vii. 8; Ps. lxxviii. 70). This epithet was a very natural one for the prophet to employ, as he not only describes the Messiah as a shepherd in ch. v. 3, but also represents Israel as the sheep of Jehovah's inheritance in ch. vii. 14, and the flock-tower is the place where the shepherd takes up his position to see whether any danger threatens his flock (cf. 2 Chron. xxvi. 10, xxvii. 4). עֲרִידָהּ תֵּאָתֶּךָ, "unto thee shall it come."<sup>1</sup> עֲרִידָהּ affirms more than אֵלֶיךָ, to thee: expressing the conquest of every obstacle that blocks up the way to the goal. תֵּאָתֶּךָ is separated from what follows, and exhibited as independent not only by the *athnach*, but also by the change of tense occurring in בָּאֵה: "to thee will it come," *sc.* what the prophet has in his mind and mentions in the next clause, but brings into special promi-

<sup>1</sup> Luther's rendering, "thy golden rose will come," arose from his confounding עֲרִידָהּ (from עָרַד, unto) with עֲרִידָהּ, thine ornament.

nence in **וּבְאֵה הָרִאשֹׁנָה**, **הַמִּזְרָא**, the former (first) reign, is the splendid rule of David and Solomon. This predicate presupposes that the sovereignty has departed from Zion, *i.e.* has been withdrawn from the Davidic family, and points back to the destruction of Jerusalem predicted in ch. iii. 12. This sovereignty is still more precisely defined as kingship over the daughter of Jerusalem (**ל** before **בִּת** is a periphrasis of the *gen. obj.*). Jerusalem, the capital of the kingdom, represents as the object sovereignty over the whole kingdom. This is to be restored to the hill of Zion, *i.e.* to the royal castle upon the top of it.

But before this takes place, the daughter Zion will lose her king, and wander into captivity to Babylon; but there she will be redeemed by the Lord out of the power of her enemies. Ver. 9. "*Now why dost thou cry a cry? Is there no king in thee, or is thy counsellor perished, that pangs have seized thee like the woman in labour?*" Ver. 10. *Writhe and break forth, O daughter Zion, like a woman in labour! For how wilt thou go out of the city and dwell in the field, and come to Babel? there wilt thou be rescued; there will Jehovah redeem thee out of the hand of thine enemies.*" From this glorious future the prophet now turns his eye to the immediate future, to proclaim to the people what will precede this glorification, viz. first of all, the loss of the royal government, and the deportation of the people to Babylon. If Micah, after announcing the devastation of Zion in ch. iii. 12, has offered to the faithful a firm ground of hope in the approaching calamities, by pointing to the highest glory as awaiting it in the future, he now guards against the abuse which might be made of this view by the careless body of the people, who might either fancy that the threat of punishment was not meant so seriously after all, or that the time of adversity would very speedily give place to a much more glorious state of prosperity, by depicting the grievous times that are still before them. Beholding in spirit the approaching time of distress as already present, he hears a loud cry, like that of a woman in labour, and inquires the cause of this lamentation, and whether it refers to the loss of her king. The words are addressed to the daughter Zion, and the meaning of the rhetorical question is simply this: Zion will lose her king, and be thrown into the deepest mourning in consequence. The loss of

the king was a much more painful thing for Israel, than for any other nation, because such glorious promises were attached to the throne, the king being the visible representative of the grace of God, and his removal a sign of the wrath of God and of the abolition of all the blessings of salvation which were promised to the nation in his person. Compare Lam. iv. 20, where Israel calls the king its vital breath (Hengstenberg). יוֹצֵר (counsellor) is also the king; and this epithet simply gives prominence to that which the Davidic king had been to Zion (cf. Isa. ix. 5, where the Messiah is designated as "Counsellor" *par excellence*). But Zion must experience this pain: writhe and break forth. *Gōchī* is strengthened by *chūli*, and is used intransitively, to break forth, describing the pain connected with the birth as being as it were a bursting of the whole nature (cf. Jer. iv. 31). It is not used transitively in the sense of "drive forth," as Hitzig and others suppose; for the determination that Jerusalem would submit, and the people be carried away, could not properly be represented as a birth or as a reorganization of things. With the words בִּי עָרְתָּה וְגו' the prophet leaves the figure, and predicts in literal terms the catastrophe awaiting the nation. עָרְתָּה (now), repeated from ver. 9, is the ideal present, which the prophet sees in spirit, but which is in reality the near or more remote future. קִרְיָהּ, without an article, is a kind of proper name, like *urbs* for Rome (Caspari). In order to set forth the certainty of the threatened judgment, and at the same time the greatness of the calamity in the most impressive manner, Micah fills up the details of the drama: viz. *going out of the city, dwelling in the field*, without shelter, delivered up to all the chances of weather, and *coming to Babel*, carried thither without delay. Going out of the city presupposes the conquest of the city by the enemy; since going out to surrender themselves to the enemy (2 Kings xxiv. 12; 1 Sam. xi. 3) does not fit in with the prophetic description, which is not a historical description in detail. Nevertheless Israel shall not perish. There (*shām*, i.e. even in Babel) will the Lord its God deliver it out of the hand of its foes.

The prediction that the daughter Zion, i.e. the nation of Israel which was governed from Zion, and had its centre in Zion—the covenant nation which, since the destruction of the kingdom of the ten tribes, existed in Judah only—should be carried

away to Babylon, and that at a time when Assyria was in the field as the chief enemy of Israel and the representative of the imperial power, goes so far beyond the bounds of the political horizon of Micah's time, that it cannot be accounted for from any natural presentiment. It is true that it has an analogon in Isa. xxxix. 6, 7, where Isaiah predicts to king Hezekiah in the most literal terms the carrying away of all his treasures, and of his sons (descendants), to Babylon. At the same time, this analogy is not sufficient to explain the prediction before us; for Isaiah's prophecy was uttered during the period immediately following the destruction of the Assyrian forces in front of Jerusalem and the arrival of Babylonian ambassadors in Jerusalem, and had a point of connection in these events, which indicated the destruction of the Assyrian empire and the rise of Babylon in its stead, at all events in the germ; whereas no such connecting link exists in the case of Micah's prophecy, which was unquestionably uttered before these events. It has therefore been thought, that in ch. iii. 12 Micah predicts the destruction of Jerusalem, and here in ver. 10 the carrying away of Judah to *Babylon* by the *Assyrians*; and this opinion, that Micah expected the judgment upon Jerusalem and Judah to be executed by the Assyrians, and not by the Babylonians, has been supported partly by such passages as ch. v. 4, 5, and Jer. xxvi. 18, 19, and partly by the circumstance that Micah threatens his own corrupt contemporaries with the judgment which he predicts on account of their sins; whereas in his time the Assyrians were the only possible executors of a judgment upon Israel who were then standing on the stage of history (Caspari). But these arguments are not decisive. All that can be inferred from ch. v. 4, 5, where Asshur is mentioned as the representative of all the enemies of Israel, and of the power of the world in its hostility to the people of God in the Messianic times, is that at the time of Micah the imperial power in its hostility to the kingdom of God was represented by Assyria; but it by no means follows that Assyria would always remain the imperial power, so that it could only be from her that Micah could expect the destruction of Jerusalem, and the carrying away of Judah to Babylon. Again, Jer. xxvi. 18, 19—where the chief men of Judah, in order to defend the prophet Jeremiah, quote Micah's prophecy, with the remark that king Hezekiah did

not put him to death in consequence, but feared the Lord and besought His face, so that the Lord repented of the evil which He had spoken concerning Jerusalem—simply proves that these chief men referred Micah's words to the Assyrians, and attributed the non-fulfilment of the threatened judgment by the Assyrians to Hezekiah's penitence and prayer, and that this was favoured by the circumstance that the Lord answered the prayer of the king, by assuring him that the Assyrian army should be destroyed (Isa. xxxvii. 21 sqq.). But whether the opinion of these chief men as to the meaning and fulfilment of Micah's prophecy (ch. iii. 12) was the correct one or not, cannot be decided from the passage quoted. Its correctness is apparently favoured, indeed, by the circumstance that Micah threatened the people of his own time with the judgment (*for your sakes* shall Zion be ploughed into a field, etc.). Now, if he had been speaking of a judgment upon Judah through the medium of the Babylonians, "he would (so Caspari thinks) not only have threatened his contemporaries with a judgment which could not fall upon them, since it was not possible till after their time, inasmuch as the Assyrians were on the stage in his day; but he would also have been most incomprehensibly silent as to the approaching Assyrian judgment, of which Isaiah spoke again and again." This argument falls to the ground with the untenable assumptions upon which it is founded. Micah neither mentions the Assyrians nor the Babylonians as executing the judgment, nor does he say a word concerning the time when the predicted devastation or destruction of Jerusalem will occur. In the expression בְּיָמֶיךָ, *for your sakes* (ch. iii. 12), it is by no means affirmed that it will take place in his time through the medium of the Assyrians. The persons addressed are the scandalous leaders of the house of Israel, *i.e.* of the covenant nation, and primarily those living in his own time, though by no means those only, but all who share their character and ungodliness, so that the words apply to succeeding generations quite as much as to his contemporaries. The only thing that would warrant our restricting the prophecy to Micah's own times, would be a precise definition by Micah himself of the period when Jerusalem would be destroyed, or his expressly distinguishing his own contemporaries from their sons and descendants. But as he has done neither the one nor the other, it cannot be said



that, inasmuch as the destruction of Jerusalem and the carrying away of the people was not effected by the Assyrians, but by the Babylonians (Chaldæans), he would have been altogether silent as to the approaching Assyrian judgment, and only threatened them with the Chaldæan catastrophe, which did not take place till a long time afterwards. His words refer to all the judgments, which took place from his own time onwards till the utter destruction of Jerusalem and the carrying away of the people to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. The onesided reference of the prophecy to the Assyrians is simply based upon an incorrect idea of the nature of prophecy, and its relation to the fulfilment, and involves the prophet Micah in an irreconcilable discrepancy between himself and his contemporary the prophet Isaiah, who does indeed predict the severe oppression of Judah by the Assyrians, but at the same time foretels the failure of the plans of these foes to the people of Jehovah, and the total destruction of their army.

This contradiction, with the consequence to which it would inevitably lead,—namely, that if one of the prophets predicted the destruction of Jerusalem by the Assyrians, whereas the other prophesied that it would not be destroyed by them, the two contemporary prophets would necessarily lead the people astray, and render both the truth of their contradictory utterances and their own divine mission doubtful,—cannot be removed by the assumption that Isaiah uttered the prophecies in ch. xxviii.—xxxii. at a somewhat later period, after Micah had published his book, and the terribly severe words of Micah in ch. iii. 12 had produced repentance. For Isaiah had predicted that the Assyrian would not conquer Jerusalem, but that his army would be destroyed under its walls, not only in ch. xxviii.—xxxii., at the time when the Assyrians are approaching with threatening aspect under Shalmaneser or Sennacherib, but much earlier than that,—namely, in the time of Ahaz, in ch. x. 5—xii. 6. Moreover, in Isa. xxviii.—xxxii. there is not a single trace that Micah's terrible threatening had produced such repentance, that the Lord was able to withdraw His threat in consequence, and predict through Isaiah the rescue of Jerusalem from the Assyrian. On the contrary, Isaiah scourges the evil judges and false prophets quite as severely in ch. xxviii. 7 sqq. and xxix. 9–12 as Micah does in ch. iii. 1–3 and

5-8. And lastly, although the distinction between conditional prophecies and those uttered unconditionally is, generally speaking, correct enough, and is placed beyond all doubt by Jer. xviii. 7-10; there is nothing in the addresses and threatenings of the two prophets to indicate that Micah uttered his threats conditionally, *i.e.* in case there should be no repentance, whereas Isaiah uttered his unconditionally. Moreover, such an explanation is proved to be untenable by the fact, that in Micah the threat of the destruction of Jerusalem and of the desolation of the temple mountain (ch. iii. 12) stands in the closest connection with the promise, that at the end of the days the mountain of God's house will be exalted above all mountains, and Jehovah reign on Zion as king for ever (ch. iv. 1-3 and 7). If this threat were only conditional, the promise would also have only a conditional validity; and the final glorification of the kingdom of God would be dependent upon the penitence of the great mass of the people of Israel,—a view which is diametrically opposed to the real nature of the prophecies of both, yea, of all the prophets. The only difference between Isaiah and Micah in this respect consists in the fact that Isaiah, in his elaborate addresses, brings out more distinctly the attitude of the imperial power of Assyria towards the kingdom of God in Israel, and predicts not only that Israel will be hard pressed by the Assyrians, but also that the latter will not overcome the people of God, but will be wrecked upon the foundation-stone laid by Jehovah in Zion; whereas Micah simply threatens the sinners with judgment, and after the judgment predicts the glorification of Zion in grand general terms, without entering more minutely into the attitude of the Assyrians towards Israel. In the main, however, Micah goes hand in hand with his contemporary Isaiah. In Isa. xxxii. 14, Isaiah also foretels the devastation, or rather the destruction, of Jerusalem, notwithstanding the fact that he has more than once announced the deliverance of the city of God from Asshur, and that without getting into contradiction with himself. For this double announcement may be very simply explained from the fact that the judgments which Israel had yet to endure, and the period of glory to follow, lay, like a long, deep diorama, before the prophet's mental eye; and that in his threatenings he plunged some-

times more, sometimes less, deeply into those judgments which lay in perspective before him (see Delitzsch on *Isaiah*, ii. p. 55). The same thing applies to Micah, who goes to a great depth both in his threats and promises, not only predicting the judgment in all its extremity,—namely, the utter destruction of Jerusalem, and the carrying away of the people to Babel,—but also the salvation in its ultimate perfection, viz. the glorification of Zion. We must therefore not restrict his threats in ch. iii. 12 and iv. 10 even to the Chaldæan catastrophe, nor the promise of Israel's deliverance in Babel out of the hands of its foes to the liberation of the Jews from Babylon, which was effected by Cyrus, and their return to Palestine under Zerubbabel and Ezra; but must also extend the threat of punishment to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans and the attendant dispersion of the Jews over all the world, and the redemption out of Babel promised in ch. iv. 10 to that deliverance of Israel which, in the main, is in the future still. These two judgments and these two deliverances are comprehended in an undivided unity in the words of the prophet, Babel being regarded not only in its historical character, but also in its typical significance, as the beginning and the hearth of the kingdom of the world. Babel has this double significance in the Scriptures from the very commencement. Even the building of the city with a tower intended to reach to heaven was a work of human pride, and an ungodly display of power (Gen. xi. 4 sqq.); and after its erection Babel was made by Nimrod the beginning of the empire of the world (Gen. x. 10). It was from these two facts that Babel became the type of the imperial power, and not because the division of the human race into nations with different languages, and their dispersion over the whole earth, had their origin there (see A. Ch. Lämmert, *Babel, das Thier und der falsche Prophet*. Goth. 1862, p. 36 sqq.); and it is in this typical significance of Babel that we have to seek not only for the reason for the divine purpose to banish the people of God to Babel, when they were given up to the power of the kingdom of the world, but also for a point of connection for the prophetic announcement when this purpose had been communicated to the prophet's mind. Micah accordingly predicts the carrying away of the daughter Zion to Babel, and her deliverance there out of the power of her enemies, not because Babel

along with Nineveh was the metropolis of the world-empire of his time, or a chief city of that empire, but because Babel, from its very origin, was a type and symbol of the imperial power. That the words of Micah, in their deepest sense, should be so interpreted, is not only warranted, but necessitated, by the announcement which follows in vers. 11-13 of the victorious conflict of Zion with many nations, which points far beyond the conflicts of the Jews in the times succeeding the captivity.

Vers. 11-13. The daughter Zion, when rescued from Babel, overcomes all hostile powers in the strength of her God. Ver. 11. "*And now many nations have assembled together against thee, who say, Let her be profaned, and let our eyes look upon Zion.*" Ver. 12. "*But they know not the thoughts of Jehovah, and understand not His counsel; for He has gathered them together like sheaves for the threshing-floor.*" Ver. 13. "*Rise up and thresh, O daughter Zion: for I make thy horn iron, and I make thy hoofs brass; and thou wilt crush many nations: and I ban their gain to Jehovah, and their substance to the Lord of the whole earth.*"

With עָתָה, corresponding to עָתָה in ver. 9, there commences a new scene, which opens to the prophet's mental eye. Many nations have assembled together against the daughter Zion (עָלֶיהָ pointing back to בֵּית צִיּוֹן in ver. 10), with the intention of profaning her, and feasting their eyes upon the profaned one. It is the holiness of Zion, therefore, which drives the nations to attack her. תִּתְחַנְּךְ, let her be or become profaned: not by the sins or bloodguiltiness of her inhabitants (Jer. iii. 2; Isa. xxiv. 5), for this is not appropriate in the mouths of heathen; but through devastation or destruction let her holiness be taken from her. They want to show that there is nothing in her holiness, and to feast their eyes upon the city thus profaned. חָזָה with ב, to look upon a thing with interest, here with malicious pleasure. On the singular *tachaz*, followed by the subject in the plural, see Ewald § 317, a. To this design on the part of the heathen, the prophet (ver. 12) opposes the counsel of the Lord. Whilst the heathen assemble together against Zion, with the intention of profaning her by devastation, the Lord has resolved to destroy them in front of Zion. The destruction which they would prepare for Zion will fall upon themselves, for the Lord gathers them together like sheaves upon the threshing-floor, to thresh, i.e. destroy, them. וְ? does not

mean "that," but "for." The sentence explains the assertion that they do not understand the counsel of the Lord. בָּעֲמִיר, with the generic article, equivalent to "like sheaves." This judgment Zion is to execute upon the heathen. The figurative expression, "Rise up, and thresh," etc., rests upon the oriental custom of threshing out corn with oxen, i.e. of having it trodden out with their hoofs (see Paulsen, *Ackerbau der Morgenländer*, § 41). In this, of course, only the strength of the hoofs was considered. But as the horn of the ox is a figure frequently used for destructive power (see Deut. xxxiii. 17, 1 Kings xxii. 11, Amos vi. 13, etc.), the prophet combines this figure, to strengthen the idea of crushing power, and express the thought that the Lord will equip Zion perfectly with the strength requisite to destroy the nations. יְהוָה־רִמְתִּי is the first person, and must not be altered into or regarded as the second, as it has been in the LXX. and Syriac, and by Jerome. The prophet does not speak in the name of the theocratic nation, as Jerome supposes, but continues to represent Jehováh as speaking, as in אֲשֵׁים, with which, however, instead of לִי, the noun לַיהוָה is used, to give greater clearness to the thought that it is Jehovah, the God and Lord of the whole earth, who will destroy the nations that have rebelled against Him and His kingdom, wresting their possessions from them, and taking them back to Himself. For everything laid under the ban belonged to the Lord, as being most holy (Lev. xxvii. 28). חֵיל, property, wealth, the sum and substance of the possessions. Israel is not to enrich itself by plundering the defeated foe, but Jehovah will sanctify the possessions of the heathen to Himself, to whom they belong as Lord of the whole earth, by laying them under the ban: that is to say, He will apply them to the glorification of His kingdom.

There has been a diversity of opinion as to the historical allusion, or the fulfilment of these verses. So much, however, is obvious at the very outset, namely, that they cannot be made to refer to the same event as ver. 9, that is to say, to the siege of Jerusalem by the Assyrians, without bringing the prophet into the most striking contradiction to himself. For, since ver. 10 predicts not a partial deportation, but the complete carrying away of Israel to Babel, and ver. 13 the perfect deliverance of Jerusalem, the people wandering out of Jerusalem into captivity (ver. 10) cannot possibly be the enemies who lead it away,

beating it utterly before Jerusalem, and banning their possessions to the Lord. There is more to favour the allusion to the victorious conflicts of the Maccabees with the Syrians, for which Theodoret, Calvin, Hengstenberg, and others decide, since these conflicts occurred in the period intervening between the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity (ver. 10) and the coming of the Messiah (ch. v. 1). But even this allusion corresponds far too little to the words of the promise for us to be able to regard it as correct. Although, for example, the war of the Maccabees was a religious war in the strict sense of the word, since the Syrians, and with them the small neighbouring nations of the Jews, set themselves to attack Judah as the nation of God, and to exterminate Judaism, the *gōyīm rabbīm*, who have assembled against Zion, and whom the Lord gathers together thither (vers. 11, 12), point to a much greater event than the attacks made by the Syrians and the surrounding tribes upon Jerusalem in the time of the Maccabees. *Gōyīm rabbīm* (many nations) points back to *gōyīm rabbīm* and *'ammīm rabbīm* in vers. 2 and 3, so that, both here and there, all the nations of the world that are hostile to God are included. Again, the defeat which they suffer before Jerusalem is much greater than the victory which the Maccabees achieved over their enemies. On the other hand, the circumstance that the Babylonian captivity is predicted in ver. 10, and the birth of the Messiah in ch. v. 1, 2, and that the victorious conflicts of the Maccabees with the Syrians and the heathen neighbours of the Jews lie in the interim between these events, furnishes no sufficient proof that these conflicts must be referred to in vers. 11-13, simply because the assumption that, in vers. 9-14, the attacks of the Chaldæans, the Græco-Syrians, and the Romans upon Zion are foretold in the order in which they followed one another in history, has no firm basis in the threefold recurrence of *'attāh* (now) in vers. 9, 11, and 14. As an event is introduced with *'attāh* in ver. 9, which does not follow the one predicted in ver. 8 in chronological sequence, but, on the contrary, the prophet comes back in *v'attāh* from the more remote to the more immediate future, it cannot be inferred from the *'attāh* in ver. 14 that the oppression mentioned there must follow the victory over many nations predicted in vers. 11-13 in chronological order, or that the siege and capture of Jerusalem by the

Romans are referred to in ver. 14. Moreover, the proclamation in ver. 10 already goes beyond the Chaldaean catastrophe, and the liberation of the Jews from the Chaldaean exile, so that if the *v'attâh* in ver. 12 announces a conflict with Zion which will follow the events predicted in vers. 9 and 10, we must not restrict the conflict to the wars of the Maccabees. We must therefore understand these verses as referring to the events already predicted by Joel (ch. iii.), and afterwards by Ezekiel (xxxviii. 39) and Zechariah (xii.), and in Rev. xx. 8 sqq.: *i.e.* to the last great attack which the nations of the world will make upon the church of the Lord, that has been redeemed from Babel and sanctified, with the design of exterminating the holy city of God from the face of the earth, and to which the attacks of the Syrians, and the rest of the nations surrounding Judah, upon the covenant nation in the times of the Maccabees, furnished but a feeble prelude. This view is favoured by the unmistakeable similarity between our verses and both Joel and Ezekiel. The *נִאסְפוּ עֲלֵיךָ גוֹיִם רַבִּים* in ver. 11, compared with *קָבְצוּ* in ver. 12, points clearly back to *אֶת־כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם* in Joel iii. 2, compared with *וְנִקְבְּצוּ* in ver. 11; and the figure in ver. 12, of the gathering together of the nations like sheaves for the threshing-floor, to the similar figures of the ripening of the harvest and the treading of the full wine-press in Joel iii. 13. And the use of *gōyīm rabbīm* in Micah is no reason for supposing that it differs in meaning from the *kol-haggōyīm* of Joel, since Micah uses *gōyīm rabbīm* in vers. 2 and 3 for the totality of the nations of the world. Ezekiel, also, simply speaks of *gōyīm rabbīm* as assembling together with Gog to attack the mountains of Israel (ch. xxxviii. 6, 9, 15); and in his case also, this attack of the nations upon Jerusalem is appended to the redemption of Israel effected at Babel. Again, the issue of this attack is the same in Micah as in Joel, Ezekiel, and Zechariah, —namely, the complete overthrow of the hostile nations by the people of Israel, who fight in the strength of the Lord, by which Jehovah manifests Himself to all nations as Lord of the whole earth, and proves Himself to be the Holy One (compare ver. 13 with Joel iii. 12, 13, and Ezek. xxxviii. 16, xxxix. 3 sqq.). Lastly, a decisive proof of the correctness of this allusion is to be found in the circumstance, that the attack of the nations is directed against Zion, which has now become holy, that it pro-

ceeds from hatred and enmity to His holiness, and has for its object the desecration of the city of God. This feature is by no means applicable to Jerusalem and Judah in the time of the Maccabees, but can only apply to the time when Israel, redeemed from Babel, forms a holy church of God, *i.e.* to the last period of the development of the kingdom of God, which began with Christ, but has not yet reached its fullest manifestation. "From the fact, however, that Zion, when sanctified, is to be delivered out of much greater danger than that from which it will not be delivered in the immediate future, and also that the refined and sanctified Zion will conquer and destroy an incomparably greater hostile force than that to which it will now soon succumb, it follows, in the clearest and most conclusive way, that in the nearest future it must be given up to the power of the world, because it is now unholy" (Caspari). This thought prepares the way for the transition to ch. v. 1, where the prophecy returns to the oppression foretold in vers. 9 and 10.

Ch. v. 1 (Heb. Bib. iv. 14). "*Now wilt thou gather in troops, thou daughter of troops; they lay siege against us; with the staff they smite the judge of Israel upon the cheek.*" With 'attâh (now) the prophet's address turns once more to the object introduced with 'attâh in ch. iv. 9. For we may see clearly enough from the omission of the cop. *Vav*, which could not be left out if it were intended to link on ch. v. 1 to ch. iv. 11-13, that this 'attâh points back to iv. 9, and is not attached to the *v'attâh* in iv. 11, for the purpose of introducing a fresh occurrence to follow the event mentioned in iv. 11-13. "The prophecy in ch. iv. 11-13 explains the ground of that in vers. 9, 10, and the one in ch. v. 1 sounds like a conclusion drawn from this explanation. The explanation in vers. 11-13 is enclosed on both sides by that which it explains. By returning in ch. v. 1 to the thoughts expressed in ch. iv. 9, the prophet rounds off the strophe in iv. 9-v. 1" (Caspari). The words are addressed to the daughter Zion, who alone is addressed with every 'attâh, and generally throughout the entire section. *Bath-g'dûd*, daughter of the troop, might mean: thou nation accustomed or trained to form troops, thou warlike Zion. But this does not apply to what follows, in which a siege alone is mentioned. This turn is given to the expression, rather "for the purpose of suggesting the thought of a crowd



of people pressing anxiously together, as distinguished from *g'dūd*, an invading troop." The verb *hithgōdēd* does not mean here to scratch one's self or make incisions (Deut. xiv. 1, etc.), but, as in Jer. v. 7, to press or crowd together; and the thought is this: Now crowd together with fear in a troop, for he (*sc.* the enemy) sets, or prepares, a siege against us. In *וַיֵּץ* the prophet includes himself in the nation as being a member of it. He finds himself in spirit along with the people in besieged Zion. The siege leads to conquest; for it is only in consequence of this that the judge of Israel can be smitten with the rod upon the cheek, *i.e.* be shamefully ill treated (compare 1 Kings xxii. 24; Ps. iii. 8; Job xvi. 10). The judge of Israel, whether the king or the Israelitish judges comprehended in one, cannot be thought of as outside the city at the time when the city is besieged. Of all the different effects of the siege of the city the prophet singles out only this one, *viz.* the ill-treatment of the judge, because "nothing shows more clearly how much misery and shame Israel will have to endure for its present sins" (Caspari). "The judge of Israel" is the person holding the highest office in Israel. This might be the king, as in Amos ii. 3 (cf. 1 Sam. viii. 5, 6, 20), since the Israelitish king was the supreme judge in Israel, or the true possessor of the judicial authority and dignity. But the expression is hardly to be restricted to the king, still less is it meant in distinction from the king, as pointing back to the time when Israel had no king, and was only governed by judges; but the judge stands for the king here, on the one hand with reference to the threat in ch. iii. 1, 9, 11, where the heads and princes of Israel are described as unjust and ungodly judges, and on the other hand as an antithesis to *mōshēl* in ver. 2. As the Messiah is not called king there, but *mōshēl*, ruler, as the possessor of supreme authority; so here the possessor of judicial authority is called *shōphēt*, to indicate the reproach which would fall upon the king and the leaders of the nation on account of their unrighteousness. The threat in this verse does not refer, however, to the Roman invasion. Such an idea can only be connected with the assumption already refuted, that ch. iv. 11-13 point to the times of the Maccabees, and no valid argument can be adduced to support it. In the verse before us the prophet reverts to the oppression predicted in ch. iv. 9 and 10, so that

the remarks already made in iv. 10 apply to the fulfilment of what is predicted here. The principal fulfilment occurred in the Chaldean period; but the fulfilment was repeated in every succeeding siege of Jerusalem until the destruction of the city by the Romans. For, according to ver. 3, Israel will be given up to the power of the empire of the world until the coming of the Messiah; that is to say, not merely till His birth or public appearance, but till the nation shall accept the Messiah, who has appeared as its own Redeemer.

#### BIRTH OF THE RULER IN ISRAEL, AND HIS PEACEFUL RULE.

—CHAP. V. 2-15 (HEB. BIB. 1-14).

At the time of Zion's deepest degradation the ruler in Israel will arise out of Bethlehem, who will not only secure for His people deliverance from their foes, but raise them into a beneficent and yet dreaded power to all nations, founding a kingdom of peace, and glorifying Israel into a holy nation.

Vers. 2-4. The previous announcement of the glory to which Zion is eventually to attain, is now completed by the announcement of the birth of the great Ruler, who through His government will lead Israel to this, the goal of its divine calling. Ver. 2. "*And thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, too small to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee will He come forth to me who will be Ruler over Israel; and His goings forth are from the olden time, from the days of eternity.*" The מְנַחֵם, with which this new section of the proclamation of salvation opens, corresponds to the מְנַחֵם in ch. iv. 8. Its former government is to return to Zion (ch. iv. 8), and out of little Bethlehem is the possessor of this government to proceed, viz. the Ruler of Israel, who has sprung from eternity. This thought is so attached to ver. 1, that the divine exaltation of the future Ruler of Israel is contrasted with the deepest degradation of the judge. The names *Bethlehem Ephratah* (*Ephrâth* and *Ephrâthâh*, i.e. the fertile ones, or the fruit-fields, being the earlier name; by the side of which *Beth-lechem*, bread-house, had arisen even in the patriarchal times: see Gen. xxxv. 19, xlviii. 7; Ruth iv. 11) are connected together to give greater solemnity to the address, and not to distinguish the Judæan Bethlehem from the one in Zebulun (Josh. xix. 15), since the

following words, "among the thousands of Judah," provide sufficiently for this. In the little town the inhabitants are addressed; and this explains the masculines **אַתָּה**, **צָעִיר**, and **מִמָּדָר**, as the prophet had them in his mind when describing the smallness of the little town, which is called **כֹּאֲמֻן** in John vii. 42. **צָעִיר לְהִיּוֹת**, literally "small with regard to the being among the 'ālāphim of Judah," i.e. too small to have a place among them. Instead of the more exact **מִהִיּוֹת לְהִיּוֹת** is probably chosen, simply because of the following **לְהִיּוֹת**.<sup>1</sup> 'Ālāphim, thousands—an epithet used as early as Num. i. 16, x. 4, to denote the families, *mishpāchōth*, i.e. larger sections into which the twelve tribes of Israel were divided (see the comm. on Num. i. 16 and Ex. xviii. 25)—does not stand for *sārē* 'ālāphim, the princes of the families; since the thought is simply this, that Bethlehem is too small for its population to form an independent 'eleph. We must not infer from this, however, that it had not a thousand inhabitants, as Caspari does; since the families were called 'ālāphim, not because the number of *individuals* in them numbered a thousand, but because the number of their families or heads of families was generally somewhere about a thousand (see my *biblische Archäologie*, § 140). Notwithstanding this smallness, the Ruler over Israel is to come forth out of Bethlehem. **יָצָא מִן** does not denote descent here, as in Gen. xvii. 6 for example, so that Bethlehem would be regarded as the father of the Messiah, as Hofmann supposes, but is to be explained in accordance with Jer. xxx. 21, "A Ruler will go forth out of the midst of it" (cf. Zech. x. 4); and the thought is simply this, "Out of the population of the little Bethlehem there will proceed and arise." **לִי** (to me) refers to Jehovah, in whose name the prophet speaks, and expresses the thought that this coming forth is subservient to the plan of the Lord, or connected with the promotion of His kingdom, just as in the words of God to Samuel in 1 Sam.

The omission of the article before **צָעִיר**, and the use of **לְהִיּוֹת** instead of **מִהִיּוֹת**, do not warrant the alteration in the text which Hitzig proposes, viz. to strike out **לְהִיּוֹת** as erroneous, and to separate the **ה** from **אַתָּה** and connect it with **צָעִיר** = **אַתָּה הַצָּעִיר**; for the assertion that **צָעִיר**, if used in apposition, must have the article, is just as unfounded as the still further remark, that "to say that Bethlehem was too small to be among the 'ālāphim of Judah is incorrect and at variance with 1 Sam. xx. 6, 29," since these passages by no means prove that Bethlehem formed an 'eleph by itself.

xvi. 1, "I have provided me a King among his sons," to which Micah most probably alluded for the purpose of showing the typical relation of David to the Messiah. **לְהִיָּת מֶלֶךְ** is really the subject to **נָצַח**, the infinitive **לְהִיָּת** being used as a relative clause, like **לְכַסּוֹת** in Hos. ii. 11, in the sense of "who is destined to be ruler." But instead of simply saying **נָצַח מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל**, Micah gives the sentence the turn he does, for the purpose of bringing sharply out the contrast between the natural smallness of Bethlehem and the exalted dignity to which it would rise, through the fact that the Messiah would issue from it. **בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל**, not *in*, but *over* Israel, according to the general meaning of **כָּשֶׁל ב**. The article is omitted before *mōshel*, because the only thing of primary importance was to give prominence to the idea of ruling; and the more precise definition follows immediately afterwards in **וּמִצְאוֹתָיו וְנֹ**. The meaning of this clause of the verse depends upon our obtaining a correct view not only of **מִצְאוֹת**, but also of the references to time which follow. **מִצְאוֹתָהּ**, the fem. of **מִצְאוֹת**, may denote the place, the time, the mode, or the act of going out. The last meaning, which Hengstenberg disputes, is placed beyond all doubt by Hos. vi. 3, 1 Kings x. 28, Ezek. xii. 4, and 2 Sam. iii. 25. The first of these senses, in which **מִצְאוֹת** occurs most frequently, and in which even the form **מִצְאוֹתָיו** is used in the *keri* in 2 Kings x. 27, which is the only other passage in which this form occurs, does not suit the predicate **מִיָּי עוֹלָם** here, since the *days* of eternity cannot be called *places* of departure; nor is it required by the correlate **מִבֵּית**, *i.e.* out of Bethlehem, because the idea which predominates in Bethlehem is that of the population, and not that of the town or locality; and in general, the antithesis between hemistich *a* and *b* does not lie in the idea of place, but in the insignificance of Bethlehem as a place of exit for Him whose beginnings are in the days of eternity. We take **מִצְאוֹתָיו** in the sense of goings forth, exits, as the meaning "times of going forth" cannot be supported by a single passage. Both **קָדָם** and **מִיָּי עוֹלָם** are used to denote hoary antiquity; for example in ch. vii. 14 and 20, where it is used of the patriarchal age. Even the two together are so used in Isa. li. 9, where they are combined for the sake of emphasis. But both words are also used in Prov. viii. 22 and 23 to denote the eternity preceding the creation of the world, because man, who lives in

time, and is bound to time in his mode of thought, can only picture eternity to himself as time without end. Which of these two senses is the one predominating here, depends upon the precise meaning to be given to the whole verse.

It is now generally admitted that the Ruler proceeding from Bethlehem is the Messiah, since the idea that the words refer to Zerubbabel, which was cherished by certain Jews, according to the assertion of Chrysostom, Theodoret, and others, is too arbitrary to have met with any acceptance. Coming forth out of Bethlehem involves the idea of descent. Consequently we must not restrict מוֹצֵאֵי (His goings forth) to the appearance of the predicted future Ruler in the olden time, or to the revelations of the Messiah as the Angel of Jehovah even in the patriarchal age, but must so interpret it that it at least affirms His origin as well. Now the origin of the Angel of the Lord, who is equal to God, was not in the olden time in which He first of all appeared to the patriarchs, but before the creation of the world—in eternity. Consequently we must not restrict מִקְדָּם מִיָּמֵי עוֹלָם (from of old, from the days of eternity) to the olden time, or exclude the idea of eternity in the stricter sense. Nevertheless Micah does not announce here the eternal proceeding of the Son from the Father, or of the Logos from God, the *generatio filii æterna*, as the earlier orthodox commentators supposed. This is precluded by the plural מוֹצֵאֵי, which cannot be taken either as the *plur. majestatis*, or as denoting the abstract, or as an indefinite expression, but points to a repeated going out, and forces us to the assumption that the words affirm both the origin of the Messiah before all worlds and His appearances in the olden time, and do not merely express the thought, that “from an inconceivably remote and lengthened period the Ruler has gone forth, and has been engaged in coming, who will eventually issue from Bethlehem” (Hofmann, *Schriftbeweis*, ii. 1, p. 9).<sup>1</sup> The announcement of the origin of

<sup>1</sup> We must reject in the most unqualified manner the attempts that have been made by the Rabbins in a polemical interest, and by rationalistic commentators from a dread of miracles, to deprive the words of their deeper meaning, so as to avoid admitting that we have any supernatural prediction here, whether by paraphrasing “His goings forth” into “the going forth of His name” (we have this even in the Chaldee), or the eternal origin into an eternal predestination (Calv.), or by understanding the going forth out of Bethlehem as referring to His springing out of the family of

this Ruler as being before all worlds unquestionably presupposes His divine nature; but this thought was not strange to the prophetic mind in Micah's time, but is expressed without ambiguity by Isaiah, when he gives the Messiah the name of "the Mighty God" (Isa. ix. 5; see Delitzsch's comm. *in loc.*). We must not seek, however, in this affirmation of the divine nature of the Messiah for the full knowledge of the Deity, as first revealed in the New Testament by the fact of the incarnation of God in Christ, and developed, for example, in the prologue to the Gospel of John. Nor can we refer the "goings forth" to the eternal proceeding of the Logos from God, as showing the inward relation of the Trinity within itself, because this word corresponds to the *לֵךְ* of the first hemistich. As this expresses primarily and directly nothing more than His issuing from Bethlehem, and leaves His descent indefinite, *לֵךְ מִבֶּתְלֵהֶם* can only affirm the going forth from God at the creation of the world, and in the revelations of the olden and primeval times.

The future Ruler of Israel, whose goings forth reach back into eternity, is to spring from the insignificant Bethlehem, like His ancestor, king David. The descent of David from Bethlehem forms the substratum not only for the prophetic announcement of the fact that the Messiah would come forth out of this small town, but also for the divine appointment that Christ was born in Bethlehem, the city of David. He was thereby to be made known to the people from His very birth as the great promised descendant of David, who would take possession of the throne of His father David for ever. As the coming forth from Bethlehem implies birth in Bethlehem, so do we see from Matt. ii. 5, 6, and John vii. 42, that the old Jewish synagogue unanimously regarded this passage as containing a prophecy of the birth of the Messiah in Bethlehem.

David, which belonged to Bethlehem (Kimchi, Abarb., and all the later Rabbins and more modern Rationalists). According to this view, the olden time and the days of eternity would stand for the primeval family; and even if such a *quid pro quo* were generally admissible, the words would contain a very unmeaning thought, since David's family was not older than any of the other families of Israel and Judah, whose origin also dated as far back as the patriarchal times, since the whole nation was descended from the twelve sons of Jacob, and through them from Abraham. (See the more elaborate refutation of these views in Hengstenberg's *Christology*, i. p. 486 sqq. translation, and Caspari's *Micha*, p. 216 sqq.)

The correctness of this view is also confirmed by the account in Matt. ii. 1-11; for Matthew simply relates the arrival of the Magi from the East to worship the new-born King in accordance with the whole arrangement of his Gospel, because he saw in this event a fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies.<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 3. "*Therefore will He give them up until the time when a travailing woman hath brought forth, and the remnant of His brethren will return, together with the sons of Israel.*" Ver. 4. "*And He will stand and feed in the strength of Jehovah, in the majesty of the name of Jehovah His God, and they will dwell, for now will He be great to the ends of the earth.*" "Therefore" (*lâkhên*): i.e. "because the great divine Ruler of Israel, from whom alone its redemption can proceed, will spring from the little Bethlehem, and therefore from the degraded family of

<sup>1</sup> In the quotation of this verse in Matt. ii. 6, the substance is given freely from memory: *Καὶ σὺ Βεθλέεμ, γῆ Ἰούδα, οὐδαμῶς ἐλαχίστη εἰ ἐν τοῖς ἡγεμόσιν Ἰούδα* ἐκ σοῦ γὰρ ἐξελεύσεται ἡγούμενος, ὅστις ποιμανεῖ τὸν λαόν μου, τὸν Ἰσραήλ. The deviations from the original text may be accounted for from the endeavour to give the sense clearly, and bring out into more distinct prominence the allusion in the words to David. The γῆ Ἰούδα, in the place of the *Ephrata* of the original, has sprung from 1 Sam. xvii. 12, where Bethlehem is distinguished from the town of the same name in Zebulun in the account of the anointing of David as king, as it frequently is in the Old Testament, by the addition of the word *Judah*; and γῆ Ἰούδα, "land of Judah," is attached loosely in apposition to the name Bethlehem, in the place of the more precise definition, "in the land of Judah." The alteration of the expression, "too small to be among the thousands of Judah," into *οὐδαμῶς ἐλαχίστη, κ.τ.λ.*, does not constitute a discrepancy, but simply alters the thought with an allusion to the glorification which Bethlehem would receive through the fact of the Messiah's springing from it. "Micah, looking at its outward condition, calls it little; but Matthew, looking at the nativity of Christ, by which this town had been most wondrously honoured and rendered illustrious, calls it very little indeed" (C. B. Mich.). The interpretation of מֵאֲלָפִים (among the thousands) by ἐν τοῖς ἡγεμόσιν (among the princes) was very naturally suggested by the personification of Bethlehem, and still more by the thought of the ἡγούμενος about to follow; and it does not alter the idea, since the families (*ʾălâphîm*) had their heads, who represented and led them. The last clause, ὅστις ποιμανεῖ, κ.τ.λ., is simply a paraphrase of מְרִיבָה, probably taken from ver. 8, and resting upon 2 Sam. v. 2, and pointing to the typical relation existing between the David born in Bethlehem and the second David, viz. the Messiah. The second hemistich of the verse is omitted, because it appeared superfluous so far as the immediate object of the quotation was concerned.

David" (Caspari). This is the correct explanation; for the reason why Israel is to be given up to the power of the nations of the world, and not to be rescued earlier, does not lie in the appearance of the Messiah as such, but in His springing from little Bethlehem. The birth of the Messiah in Bethlehem, and not in Jerusalem the city of David, presupposes that the family of David, out of which it is to spring, will have lost the throne, and have fallen into poverty. This could only arise from the giving up of Israel into the power of its enemies. Micah had already stated clearly enough in what precedes, that this fate would fall upon the nation and the royal house of David, on account of its apostasy from the Lord; so that he could overlook this here, and give prominence to the other side alone, namely to the fact that, according to the counsel of God, the future Deliverer and Ruler of Israel would also resemble His royal ancestor David in the fact that He was not to spring from Zion the royal city built on high, but from the insignificant country town of Bethlehem, and that for this very reason Israel was to remain so long under the power of the nations of the world. The suffix attached to יְהִינָם points to יִשְׂרָאֵל in ver. 1; and נָתַן is applied, as in 1 Kings xiv. 16, to the surrender of Israel into the power of its enemies as a punishment for its sins. This surrender is not the last of many oppressions, which are to take place in the period before the birth of the Messiah (the Roman oppression), but a calamity lasting from the present time, or the coming of the judgment threatened in ch. iii., until the time of the Messiah's coming; and יְהִינָם points back not merely to ver. 1, but also to ch. iv. 9, 10. The travailing woman (*yōlēdāh*) is not the community of Israel (Theodoret, Calvin, Vitringa, and others), but the mother of the Messiah (Cyril, and most of the Christian expositors, including even Ewald and Hitzig). The supposition that the congregation is personified here, is precluded not only by the fact that in the very same sentence the *sons of Israel* are spoken of in the plural, but still more by the circumstance that in that case the bringing forth would be only a figurative representation of the joy following the pain, in which the obvious allusion in the words to the Messiah, which is required by the context, and especially by the suffix to מָחִי, which refers to the Messiah, and presupposes that His birth is referred to in יִלְדָּה יְלִידָה, would



entirely fall away. But Micah had all the more ground for speaking of this, inasmuch as Isaiah had already predicted the birth of the Messiah (Isa. vii. 14). יְלִידָהּ has no article, and the travailing woman is thereby left indefinite, because the thought, "till He is born," or "till a mother shall bring Him forth," upon which alone the whole turns, did not require any more precise definition.

In the second clause of the verse there commences the description of the blessing, which the birth of the Messiah will bring to Israel. The first blessing will be the return of those that remain of Israel to the Lord their God. אֶחָיו, the brethren of the Ruler born at Bethlehem, are the Judæans as the members of the Messiah's own tribe; just as, in 2 Sam. xix. 13, David calls the Judæans his brethren, his flesh and bone, in contrast with the rest of the Israelites. יְהוֹרָם, the remnant of his brethren, are those who are rescued from the judgment that has fallen upon Judah; *yether*, as in Zeph. ii. 9 and Zech. xiv. 2, denoting the remnant, in distinction from those who have perished (= שְׁאֵרִית, ch. ii. 12, iv. 7, etc.). וְשֹׁבֵב, to return, not from exile to Canaan, but to Jehovah, *i.e.* to be converted. עַל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, not "to the sons of Israel;" for although שֹׁבֵב, construed with עַל, is met with in the sense of outward return (*e.g.* Prov. xxvi. 11) as well as in that of spiritual return to the Lord (2 Chron. xxx. 9), the former explanation would not give any suitable meaning here, not only because "the sons of Israel," as distinguished from the brethren of the Messiah, could not possibly denote the true members of the nation of God, but also because the thought that the Judæans are to return, or be converted, to the Israelites of the ten tribes, is altogether unheard of, and quite at variance with the idea which runs through all the prophetic Scriptures of the Old Testament,—namely, that after the division of the kingdom, Judah formed the kernel of the covenant nation, with which the rebellious Israelites were to be united once more. עַל signifies here together with, at the same time as (Hofmann, Caspari), as in Jer. iii. 18 with the verb וְלָכִי, and in Ex. xxxv. 22 with בְּיָמָי; and "the sons of Israel" are the Israelites of the ten tribes, and, in this connection, those that are left of the ten tribes. There is no ground for the objection offered by Hengstenberg to this explanation, namely, that "it is absurd that the ten tribes should appear to

be the principal persons redeemed;" for this is not implied in the words. The meaning "together with," for  $\text{לְ}$ , is not derived from the primary meaning, thereupon, in addition to, *insuper*, as Ewald supposes (§ 217, i), nor from the idea of accompanying, as Ges. and Dietrich maintain. The persons introduced with  $\text{לְ}$  are never the principal objects, as the two passages quoted sufficiently prove. The women in Ex. xxxv. 22 ( $\text{עַל הַנָּשִׁים}$ ) are not the principal persons, taking precedence of the men; nor is the house of Israel placed above the house of Judah in Jer. iii. 18. The use of  $\text{לְ}$  in the sense of together with has been developed rather from the idea of protecting, shielding, as in Gen. xxxii. 12, slaying the mothers upon, *i.e.* together with, the children, the mothers being thought of as screening the children, as Hos. x. 14 and other passages clearly show. Consequently the person screening the other is the principal person, and not the one covered or screened. And so here, the brethren of the Messiah, like the sons of Judah in Jer. iii. 18, which passage is generally so like the one before us that it might be regarded as an exposition of it, are those who first receive the blessing coming from the Messiah; and the sons of Israel are associated with them as those to whom this blessing only comes in fellowship with them. In ver. 3 there follows what the Messiah will do for Israel when it has returned to God. He will feed it ( $\text{עָמַר}$ ) simply belongs to the pictorial description, as in Isa. lxi. 5) in the strength of Jehovah. The feeding, as a frequent figure for governing, reminds of David, whom the Lord had called from the flock to be the shepherd of His people (2 Sam. v. 2). This is done in the strength of Jehovah, with which He is invested, to defend His flock against wolves and robbers (see John x. 11, 12).<sup>1</sup> This strength is not merely the divine authority with which earthly rulers are usually endowed (1 Sam. ii. 10), but  $\text{גִּבּוֹרַת}$ , *i.e.* the exaltation or majesty of the name of Jehovah, the majesty in which Jehovah

<sup>1</sup> The word "feed" expresses what Christ is towards His people, the flock committed to His care. He does not rule over the church like a formidable tyrant, who oppresses his people by fear; but He is a shepherd, and leads His sheep with all the gentleness to be desired. And inasmuch as we are surrounded on all sides by enemies, the prophet adds, "He will feed in the strength," etc.; *i.e.*, as much power as there is in God, so much protection will there be in Christ, whenever it shall be necessary to defend the church, and guard it against its foes (Calvin).

manifests His deity on earth. The Messiah is *El gibbôr* (the Mighty God, Isa. ix. 5), and equipped with the spirit of might (*rûach g'bhûrah*, Isa. xi. 2). "Of His God;" for Jehovah is the God of this Shepherd or Ruler, *i.e.* He manifests Himself as God to Him more than to any other; so that the majesty of Jehovah is revealed in what He does. In consequence of this feeding, they (the sons of Israel) sit (*yâshâbhû*), without being disturbed (cf. ch. iv. 4; Lev. xxvi. 5, 6; 2 Sam. vii. 10), *i.e.* will live in perfect undisturbed peace under His pastoral care. For He (the Messiah) will now (*נָתַן*, now, referring to the time when He feeds Israel, in contrast with the former oppression) be great (*auctoritate et potentia valebit*: Maurer) to the ends of the earth, *i.e.* His authority will extend over the whole earth. Compare the expression in Luke i. 32, *οὗτος ἔσται μέγας*, which has sprung from the passage before us, and the parallel in Mal. i. 14.

Vers. 5 and 6. Under His rule Israel will attain to perfect peace. Ver. 5. "*And He will be peace. When Asshur shall come into our land, and when he shall tread in our palaces, we set up against him seven shepherds and eight princes of men.*" Ver. 6. "*And they feed the land of Asshur with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in his gates; and He rescues from Asshur when he comes into our land and enters into our border.*" *נָתַן* (this man), viz. He who feeds His people in the majesty of God, will be peace, *i.e.* not merely *pacis auctor*, but He who carries peace within Himself, and gives it to His people. Compare Eph. ii. 14, "He is our peace," which points back to this passage. In this relation the Messiah is called the Prince of peace in Isa. ix. 5, as securing peace for Israel in a higher and more perfect sense than Solomon. But in what manner? This is explained more fully in what follows: viz. (1) by defending Israel against the attacks of the imperial power (vers. 5b, 6); (2) by exalting it into a power able to overcome the nations (vers. 7-9); and (3) by exterminating all the materials of war, and everything of an idolatrous nature, and so preventing the possibility of war (vers. 10-15). Asshur is a type of the nations of the world by which the people of the Lord are attacked, because in the time of the prophet this power was the imperial power by which Israel was endangered. Against this enemy Israel will set up seven, yea eight princes, who, under the chief command

of the Messiah, *i.e.* as His subordinates, will drive it back, and press victoriously into its land. (On the combination of the numbers seven and eight, see the discussions at Amos i. 3.) Seven is mentioned as the number of the works proceeding from God, so that seven shepherds, *i.e.* princes, would be quite sufficient; and this number is surpassed by the eight, to express the thought that there might be even more than were required. **נָסַחְתִּי אֲדָם**, not anointed of men, but installed and invested, from *nāsakh*, to pour out, to form, to appoint; hence Josh. xiii. 21, vassals, here the under-shepherds appointed by the Messiah as the upper-shepherd. The meaning "anointed," which is derived from *sakh*, neither suits Josh. xiii. 21 nor Prov. viii. 23 (see Delitzsch on Ps. ii. 6). On the figurative expression "feed with the sword," for rule, see Ps. ii. 9 and Rev. ii. 27; **רָעַו** from **רָעָה**, not from **רָעַע**. The land of Asshur is called the land of Nimrod, after the founder of the first empire (Gen. x. 9 sqq.), to indicate the character of the imperial power with its hostility to the kingdom of God. **בַּפְּתָחֶיהָ**, in his gates, *i.e.* cities and fortresses; gates for cities, as in Isa. iii. 26, xiii. 2, etc.: not at his gates = on his borders, where the Assyrians stream together for defence (Hitzig, Caspari, etc.). The borders of a land are never called gates; nor could a land be devastated or governed from the border, to say nothing of the fact that **בַּפְּתָחֶיהָ** corresponds to "in thy palaces" in ver. 4, and leads to the thought that Asshur is to be fully repaid for what it has done to the kingdom of God. The thought is rounded off with **וְהוֹצִיל מֵאֲשׁוּר וְגו'**, and so He saves from Asshur, etc., not merely by the fact that Asshur is driven back to his own border, and watched there, but by the fact that he is fed in his own territory with the sword. This victorious conflict with the imperial power must not be restricted to the spiritual victory of the kingdom of God over the kingdoms of the world, as Hengstenberg supposes, appealing to vers. 10 sqq., according to which the Lord will make His people outwardly defenceless before it becomes fully victorious in Christ (Hengstenberg). For the extermination of the instruments of war announced in ver. 10 refers not to the period of the exaltation of the people of God into the world-conquering power, but to the time of consummation, when the hostile powers shall be overcome. Before the people of God reach this goal, they have not only to carry on spiritual conflicts, but to

fight for existence and recognition even with the force of arms. The prediction of this conflict and victory is not at variance with the announcement in ch. iv. 2, 3, that in the Messianic times all nations will go on pilgrimage to Zion, and seek for adoption into the kingdom of God. Both of these will proceed side by side. Many nations, *i.e.* great crowds out of all nations, will seek the Lord and His gospel, and enter into His kingdom; but a great multitude out of all nations will also persist in their enmity to the Lord and His kingdom and people, and summon all their power to attack and crush it. The more the gospel spreads among the nations, the more will the enmity of unbelief and ungodliness grow, and a conflict be kindled, which will increase till the Lord shall come to the last judgment, and scatter all His foes.

Vers. 7-9. But the Messiah will prove Himself to be peace to His people, not only by the fact that He protects and saves it from the attacks of the imperial power represented by Asshur, but also by the fact that He endows His rescuing people with the power to overcome their enemies, both spiritually and bodily also. Ver. 7. *"And the remnant of Jacob will be in the midst of many nations like dew from Jehovah, like drops of rain upon grass, which tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for children of men."* Ver. 8. *"And the remnant of Jacob will be among the nations, in the midst of many nations, like the lion among the beasts of the forest, like the young lion among the flocks of sheep; which, when it goes through, treads down, and tears in pieces, without deliverer."* Ver. 9. *"High be thy hand above thine oppressors, and may all thine enemies be rooted out."* Two things are predicted here. In the first place (ver. 7), Israel will come upon many nations, like a refreshing dew from Jehovah, which falls plentifully in drops upon the grass, and will produce and promote new and vigorous life among them. Dew is here, as indeed everywhere else, a figurative expression for refreshing, stimulating, enlivening (cf. Ps. cx. 3, cxxxiii. 3, and lxxii. 6; Hos. xiv. 6; Deut. xxxiii. 2). The spiritual dew, which Jacob will bring to the nations, comes from Jehovah, and falls in rich abundance without the co-operation of men. Without the spiritual dew from above, the nations are grass (cf. Isa. xl. 6-8). **לֹא יִקְדָּה אֲשֶׁר** before **לֹא יִקְדָּה** does not refer to **נֶשֶׁב**, but to the principal idea of the preceding clause, viz. to **בָּל**, to

which the explanatory פְּרִיכִים וְנִי is subordinate. As the falling of the dew in rain-drops upon the grass does not depend upon the waiting of men, but proceeds from Jehovah; so will the spiritual blessing, which will flow over from Israel upon the nations, not depend upon the waiting of the nations, but will flow to them against and beyond their expectation. This does not deny the fact that the heathen wait for the salvation of Jehovah, but simply expresses the thought that the blessings will not be measured by their expectation. Secondly (vers. 8, 9), the rescued Israel will prove itself a terrible power among the nations, and one to which they will be obliged to succumb. No proof is needed that vers. 8, 9 do not state in what way Israel will refresh the heathen, as Hitzig supposes. The refreshing dew and the rending lion cannot possibly be synonymous figures. The similarity of the introduction to vers. 7 and 8 points of itself to something new. To the nations Christ is set for the rising and falling of many (compare Luke ii. 34, Rom. ix. 33, with Isa. viii. 14 and xxviii. 16). The people of God shows itself like a lion, trampling and rending the sheep among the nations of the world which oppose its beneficent work. And over these may it triumph. This wish (*tārōm* is optative) closes the promise of the attitude which Israel will assume among the nations of the world. For *tārōm yād* (high be the hand), compare Isa. xxvi. 11. High is the hand which accomplishes mighty deeds, which smites and destroys the foe.

Vers. 10-15. But if Israel conquer the nations in such a way as this, then will Jehovah fulfil the peace of His people by the destruction of all the instruments of war, and the extermination of everything of an idolatrous nature, as well as by the judgment of wrath upon all resisting nations. Ver. 10. *"And it comes to pass in that day, is the saying of Jehovah, that I will destroy thy horses out of the midst of thee, and annihilate thy chariots. Ver. 11. And I shall destroy the cities of thy land, and throw down all thy fortresses. Ver. 12. And I shall destroy the witchcrafts out of thy hand; and cloud-interpreters shall not be left to thee. Ver. 13. And I shall destroy thy graven images and thy statutes out of the midst of thee; and thou wilt no more worship the work of thy hands. Ver. 14. And I shall root out thine idol-groves out of the midst of thee, and destroy thy cities. Ver. 15. And I shall execute*

*vengeance in wrath and fury upon the nations which have not heard."* These verses do not explain ver. 8b, or state how the extermination of the enemy is to take place, or how Israel is made into a lion destroying the nations that are hostile to it, namely, by the fact that the Lord eradicates from its heart all confidence in horses, chariots, and fortifications, in witchcraft and idolatry (Caspari). This assumption is at variance with the words themselves, and with the strophic arrangement of the chapter. There is nothing about trust in horses, etc., but simply about the extermination of the horses, and everything else in which the idolatrous nation had sought its strength. Moreover, the expression *וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא*, when compared with *וְהָיָה* in vers. 4 and 6, shows at once that these verses are intended to depict the last and greatest effect produced by the coming of the Prince of peace in Israel, and overthrows Hengstenberg's assumption, that the prophet here foretells the destructive work of the Lord in Israel, which will precede the destruction of the enemy predicted in ver. 10. In that case *בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא* would mean "before that day," a meaning which it can never have. The prophet passes rather from the attitude of Israel among the nations, to the description of the internal perfection of the kingdom of God, which does indeed stand in a reciprocal relation to the former and proceed simultaneously with it, but which will not be completed till after the victorious suppression of the foe. Only when the people of God shall have gained the supremacy over all their enemies, will the time have arrived for all the instruments of war to be destroyed. When the world shall be overcome, then will all war cease. The ancient Israel did indeed put its trust in war-horses, and war-chariots, and fortifications (cf. Isa. ii. 7); but the Messianic Israel, or the true people of the Lord, will only put its trust in such things so far as it is not yet pervaded by the power of the peace brought by the Messiah. And the more it appropriates the spiritual power of the Prince of peace, the more will the trust in horses and chariots disappear; so that they will be destroyed, because all war comes to an end (compare Isa. ix. 4-6). And the extermination of everything of an idolatrous nature will go hand in hand with this. Two kinds are mentioned in vers. 12 and 13, viz. witchcraft and the worship of idols of their own making. As objects of witchcraft

there are mentioned *k'shāphim*, lit. witchcrafts of different kinds, but the expression מִדְּיָד (= *m'ōn'ēm* in Isa. ii. 6), lit. cloud-interpreters, or cloud, *i.e.* storm makers, from *'ānan*, a kind of witchcraft which cannot be more precisely defined (see Delitzsch on *Isaiah*, *l.c.*). Of the objects of the idolatrous worship there are mentioned (after Lev. xxvi. 1) *p'silim*, idols made of wood or metal; and מַצֵּבֹת, stone-images, or stones dedicated to idols (see at 1 Kings xiv. 23). For ver. 12*b*, compare Isa. ii. 8.—Ver. 14 sums up the objects enumerated in vers. 10-13, which are to be exterminated, for the purpose of rounding off the description; the only objects of idolatrous worship mentioned being the *'āshērim*, and the only materials of war, the cities as means of defence. אֲשֵׁרִים, written with *scriptio plena*, as in Deut. vii. 5 and 2 Kings xvii. 16, lit. stems of trees or posts standing upright or set up as idols, which were dedicated to the Canaanitish goddess of nature (see at Ex. xxxiv. 13). עָרִים, cities with walls, gates, and bolts. These two rather subordinate objects are mentioned *instar omnium*, to express the entire abolition of war and idolatry. We must not infer from this, however, that the nation of God will still have images made by human hands and worship them, during the stage of its development described in vers. 10-14; but must distinguish between the thought and its formal dress. The gross heathen idolatry, to which Israel was addicted under the Old Testament, is a figure denoting that more refined idolatry which will exist even in the church of Christ so long as sin and unbelief endure. The extermination of every kind of heathen idolatry is simply the Old Testament expression for the purification of the church of the Lord from everything of an idolatrous and ungodly nature. To this there is appended in ver. 15 a promise that the Lord will take vengeance, and wrath, and fury upon the nations which have not heard or have not observed the words and acts of the Lord, *i.e.* have not yielded themselves up to conversion. In other words, He will exterminate every ungodly power by a fierce judgment, so that nothing will ever be able to disturb the peace of His people and kingdom again.



## III. THE WAY TO SALVATION.—CHAP. VI. AND VII.

Micah having declared to the people of Israel not only the judgment that will burst upon Zion on account of its sins, but also the salvation awaiting in the future the remnant saved and purified through the judgment, now proceeds, in the third and last address, to point out the way to salvation, by showing that they bring punishment upon themselves by their ingratitude and resistance to the commandments of God, and that it is only through sincere repentance that they can participate in the promised covenant mercies.

## EXHORTATION TO REPENTANCE, AND DIVINE THREATENING.

## —CHAP. VI.

In the form of a judicial contest between the Lord and His people, the prophet holds up before the Israelites their ingratitude for the great blessings which they have received from God (vers. 1-5), and teaches them that the Lord does not require outward sacrifices to appease His wrath, but righteousness, love, and humble walk with God (vers. 6-8), and that He must inflict severe punishment, because the people practise violence, lying, and deceit instead (vers. 9-14).

Vers. 1 and 2. Introduction.—Announcement of the lawsuit which the Lord will have with His people.—Ver. 1. *"Hear ye, then, what Jehovah saith; Rise up, contend with the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice!"* Ver. 2. *Hear ye, O mountains, Jehovah's contest; and ye immutable ones, ye foundations of the earth! For Jehovah has a contest with His people; and with Israel will He contend."* In ver. 1 the nation of Israel is addressed in its several members. They are to hear what the Lord says to the prophet,—namely, the summons addressed to the mountains and hills to hear Jehovah's contest with His people. The words "strive with the mountains" cannot be understood here as signifying that the mountains are the objects of the accusation, notwithstanding the fact that *'אֶתֶּם רִיב* signifies to strive or quarrel with a person (Judg. viii. 1; Isa. l. 8; Jer. ii. 9); for, according to ver. 2, they are to hear the contest of Jehovah with Israel, and therefore are

to be merely witnesses on the occasion. Consequently אֵת can only express the idea of fellowship here, and רֵיב אֵת must be distinguished from רֵיב עִם in ver. 2 and Hos. iv. 1, etc. The mountains and hills are to hearken to the contest (as in Deut. xxxii. 1 and Isa. i. 2), as witnesses, "who have seen what the Lord has done for Israel throughout the course of ages, and how Israel has rewarded Him for it all" (Caspari), to bear witness on behalf of the Lord, and against Israel. Accordingly the mountains are called הָאֲתִנִּיחִים, the constantly enduring, immutable ones, which have been spectators from time immemorial, and מוֹסְדֵי אֶרֶץ, foundations of the earth, as being subject to no change on account of their strength and firmness. In this respect they are often called "the everlasting mountains" (e.g. Gen. xlix. 26; Deut. xxxiii. 15; Ps. xc. 2; Hab. iii. 6). Israel is called 'ammî (Jehovah's people) with intentional emphasis, not only to indicate the right of Jehovah to contend with it, but to sharpen its own conscience, by pointing to its calling. *Hithvakkach*, like *hivvâkhach* in the *niphal* in Isa. i. 18.

Vers. 3-5 open the suit. Ver. 3. "*My people! what have I done unto thee, and with what have I wearied thee? Answer me.*" Ver. 4. "*Yea, I have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, redeemed thee out of the slave-house, and sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.*" Ver. 5. "*My people! remember now what Balak the king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim to Gilgal; that thou mayest discern the righteous acts of Jehovah.*" The Lord opens the contest with the question, what He has done to the nation, that it has become tired of Him. The question is founded upon the fact that Israel has fallen away from its God, or broken the covenant. This is not distinctly stated, indeed; but it is clearly implied in the expression מָה הִלֵּאתִיךָ לִי, What have I done, that thou hast become weary of me? לֵאמֹר, in the *hiphil*, to make a person weary, more particularly to weary the patience of a person, either by demands of too great severity (Isa. xliii. 23), or by failing to perform one's promises (Jer. ii. 31). עָנֵה כִּי, answer against me, i.e. accuse me. God has done His people no harm, but has only conferred benefits upon them. Of these He mentions in ver. 4 the bringing up out of Egypt and the guidance through the Arabian desert, as being the greatest manifestations of divine grace, to which Israel owes its exalta-

tion into a free and independent nation (cf. Amos ii. 10 and Jer. ii. 6). The *le* (for) may be explained from the unexpressed answer to the questions in ver. 3: "Nothing that could cause dissatisfaction with me;" *for* I have done nothing but confer benefits upon thee. To set forth the leading up out of Egypt as such a benefit, it is described as redemption out of the house of bondage, after Ex. xx. 2. Moreover, the Lord had given His people prophets, men entrusted with His counsels and enlightened by His Spirit, as leaders into the promised land: viz. Moses, with whom He talked mouth to mouth, as a friend to his friend (Num. xii. 8); and Aaron, who was not only able as high priest to ascertain the counsel and will of the Lord for the sake of the congregation, by means of the "light and right," but who also, along with Moses, represented the nation before God (Num. xii. 6, xiv. 5, 26, xvi. 20, xx. 7 sqq., and 29). Miriam, the sister of the two, is also mentioned along with them, inasmuch as she too was a prophetess (Ex. xv. 20). In ver. 5 God also reminds them of the other great display of grace, viz. the frustration of the plan formed by the Moabitish king Balak to destroy Israel by means of the curses of Balaam (Num. xxii.-xxiv.). *le* refers to the plan which Balak concocted with the elders of Midian (Num. xxii. 3 sqq.); and *le*, Balaam's answering, to the sayings which this soothsayer was compelled by divine constraint to utter against his will, whereby, as Moses says in Deut. xxiii. 5, 6, the Lord turned the intended curse into a blessing. The words "from Shittim (Israel's last place of encampment beyond Jordan, in the steppes of Moab; see at Num. xxii. 1 and xxv. 1) to Gilgal" (the first place of encampment in the land of Canaan; see at Josh. iv. 19, 20, and v. 9) do not depend upon *le*, adding a new feature to what has been mentioned already, in the sense of "think of all that took place from Shittim to Gilgal," in which case *le* would have to be repeated in thought; but they are really attached to the clause *le*, and indicate the result, or the confirmation of Balaam's answer. The period of Israel's journeying from Shittim to Gilgal embraces not only Balak's advice and Balaam's answer, by which the plan invented for the destruction of Israel was frustrated, but also the defeat of the Midianites, who attempted to destroy Israel by seducing it to idolatry, the miraculous crossing of the

Jordan, the entrance into the promised land, and the circumcision at Gilgal, by which the generation that had grown up in the desert was received into the covenant with Jehovah, and the whole nation reinstated in its normal relation to its God. Through these acts the Lord had actually put to shame the counsel of Balak, and confirmed the fact that Balaam's answer was inspired by God.<sup>1</sup> By these divine acts Israel was to discern the *tsidqôth Y'hôvâh*; i.e. not the mercies of Jehovah, for *ts'dâqâh* does not mean mercy, but "the righteous acts of Jehovah," as in Judg. v. 11 and 1 Sam. xii. 7. This term is applied to those miraculous displays of divine omnipotence in and upon Israel, for the fulfilment of His counsel of salvation, which, as being emanations of the divine covenant faithfulness, attested the righteousness of Jehovah.

Vers. 6-8. Israel cannot deny these gracious acts of its God. The remembrance of them calls to mind the base ingratitude with which it has repaid its God by rebelling against Him; so that it inquires, in vers. 6, 7, with what it can appease the Lord, i.e. appease His wrath. Ver. 6. *"Wherewith shall I come to meet Jehovah, bow myself before the God of the high place? Shall I come to meet Him with burnt-offerings, with yearling calves?"* Ver. 7. *"Will Jehovah take pleasure in thousands of rams, in ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give up my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"* As Micah has spoken in vers. 3-5 in the name of Jehovah, he now proceeds, in vers. 6, 7, to let the congregation speak; not, however, by turning directly to God, since it recognises itself as guilty before Him, but by asking the prophet, as the interpreter of the divine will, what it is to do to repair the bond of fellowship which has been rent in pieces by its guilt. וְיָבֹא does not here mean to anticipate, or come before, but to come to meet, as in Deut. xxiii. 5. Coming to meet, however, can only signify humble prostration (*kâphaph*) before the divine majesty. The God of the high place is the God dwelling in the high place (Isa. xxxiii. 5, lvii. 15), or enthroned in heaven (Ps. cxv. 3). It is only with sacrifices, the means

<sup>1</sup> With this view, which has already been suggested by Hengstenberg, the objections offered by Ewald, Hitzig, and others, to the genuineness of the words "from Shittim to Gilgal," the worthlessness of which has been demonstrated by Caspari, fall to the ground.

appointed by God Himself for the maintenance of fellowship with Him, that any man can come to meet Him. These the people offer to bring; and, indeed, burnt-offerings. There is no reference here to sin-offerings, through which disturbed or interrupted fellowship could be restored, by means of the expiation of their sins; because the people had as yet no true knowledge of sin, but were still living under the delusion that they were standing firmly in the covenant with the Lord, which they themselves had practically dissolved. As burnt-offerings, they would bring calves and rams, not because they formed the only material, but because they were the material most usually employed; and, indeed, calves of a year old, because they were regarded as the best, not because no others were allowed to be offered, as Hitzig erroneously maintains; for, according to the law, calves and lambs could be offered in sacrifice even when they were eight days old (Lev. xxii. 27; Ex. xxii. 29). In the case of the calves the value is heightened by the quality, in that of the rams by the quantity: thousands of rams; and also myriads of rivers of oil (for this expression, compare Job xx. 17). Oil not only formed part of the daily *minchah*, but of the *minchah* generally, which could not be omitted from any burnt-offering (compare Num. xv. 1-16 with ch. xxviii. and xxix.), so that it was offered in very large quantities. Nevertheless, in the consciousness that these sacrifices might not be sufficient, the people would offer the dearest thing of all, viz. the first-born son, as an expiation for their sin. This offer is founded, no doubt, upon the true idea that sacrifice shadows forth the self-surrender of man to God, and that an animal is not a sufficient substitute for a man; but this true idea was not realized by literal (bodily) human sacrifices: on the contrary, it was turned into an ungodly abomination, because the surrender which God desires is that of the spirit, not of the flesh. Israel could and should have learned this, not only from the sacrifice of Isaac required by God (Gen. xxii.), but also from the law concerning the consecration or sanctification of the first-born (Ex. xiii. 12, 13). Hence this offer of the nation shows that it has no true knowledge of the will of its God, that it is still entangled in the heathen delusion, that the wrath of God can be expiated by human sacrifices (cf. 2 Kings iii. 27, xvi. 3).

The prophet therefore proceeds in ver. 8 to overthrow these

outward means of reconciliation with God, and reminds the people of the moral demands of the law. Ver. 8. "*They have told thee, O man, what is good, and what Jehovah requires of thee, simply to do right, and love good, and walk humbly with thy God.*" הִגִּיד, impersonal, "one has told," or they have told thee, namely Moses in the law. The opinion that Jehovah should be supplied as the subject is a very improbable one, for the simple reason that Jehovah is expressly mentioned in the second dependent clause. The use of נִסִּי, *nisi*, as in the similar connection of thought in Deut. x. 12, may be accounted for from the retrospective allusion to the gifts mentioned by the people: not outward sacrifices of any kind, *but only* the fulfilment of the three following duties: namely, above all things, doing righteousness and exercising love. These two embrace all the commandments of the second table, of whose fulfilment Israel thought so little, that it was addicted to the very opposite, —namely, injustice, oppression, and want of affection (*vid.* ch. ii. 1, 2, 8, iii. 2, 3, 9 sqq., vi. 10 sqq.). There is also a third: humble walk with God, *i.e.* in fellowship with God, as Israel, being a holy priestly nation, ought to walk. Without these moral virtues, sacrificial worship was a spiritless *opus operatum*, in which God had no pleasure (see at 1 Sam. xv. 22 and Hos. vi. 6).

Vers. 9–16. But because Israel is altogether wanting in these virtues, the Lord must threaten and punish. Ver. 9. "*The voice of Jehovah, to the city it cries, and wisdom has thy name in its eye; hear ye the rod, and who appoints it!*" With these words Micah introduces the threatening and reproachful words of the Lord. קוֹל יְהוָה is not to be taken by itself, as an exclamation, "Hark! voice of the Lord!" as in Isa. xiii. 4, xl. 6, etc. (Umbreit), but must be connected with what follows, in accordance with the accents. Whilst the prophet tells the people in ver. 8 what Jehovah requires, he introduces the following threat with "voice of Jehovah," etc., to give the greater emphasis to the reproof, by intimating that it is not his own voice, but Jehovah's, which is speaking now. "To the city," *i.e.* to the chief city of the kingdom, viz. Jerusalem. The sentence which follows, and which has been explained in very different ways, has the same object. חִכְמָה, a word borrowed from the Chokmah-literature (Proverbs and Job), both here and Isa. xxviii. 29, formed from חָכַם or the

root  $\text{חָשַׁב}$  ( $\text{חָשָׁה}$ ), in the sense of *subsistentia*, *substantia*, then mostly *vera et realis sapientia* (see Delitzsch on Job xxvi. 3).  $\text{יִרְאֶה שְׁמִיךְ}$  is taken by many as a relative clause, "Blessed is he who sees Thy name," i.e. gives heed to Thy revelation, Thy government of the universe; but if this were the sense, the relative could not have been omitted, or the infinitive  $\text{יִרְאֶה}$  must have been used.  $\text{חָשַׁב}$  is rather to be taken as the object, and  $\text{שְׁמִיךְ}$  as the subject: Thy name sees wisdom, i.e. has the true wisdom of life in sight ( $\text{יִרְאֶה}$  as in Gen. xx. 10 and Ps. lxvi. 18). There is no necessity for the conjecture  $\text{יִרְאֶה}$  for  $\text{יִרְאֶה}$  (Ewald and Hitzig); and notwithstanding the fact that  $\text{יִרְאֶה}$  is adopted in all the ancient versions, it is unsuitable, since the thought "wisdom is to fear Thy name" would be a very strange one in this connection, unless we could paraphrase the *name* into "word of the person speaking." For other explanations, see Caspari. Hear ye, i.e. observe, the rod, viz. the judgment threatened by the Lord, and appointed for His rebellious nation. The reference is to the imperial power of Assyria, which Isaiah also describes in Isa. x. 5, 24, as the *mattek* and *shēbhet* by which Israel is smitten. The suffix to  $\text{יְעָרֶה}$  refers to  $\text{שֹׁבֵט}$ , which is construed here as a feminine;  $\text{יְעָ}$  denotes the appointment of an instrument of punishment, as in Jer. xlvii. 7.

The threatening words commence in ver. 10; vers. 10-12 containing a condemnation of the prevailing sins. Ver. 10. "*Are there yet in the house of the unjust treasures of injustice, and the ephah of consumption, the cursed one?*" Ver. 11. "*Can I be clean with the scale of injustice, and with a purse with stones of deceit?*" Ver. 12. "*That their rich men are full of wickedness, and their inhabitants speak deceit, and their tongue is falseness in their mouth.*" The reproof is dressed up in the form of a question. In the question in ver. 10 the emphasis is laid upon the  $\text{עוֹל}$ , which stands for that very reason before the interrogative particle, as in Gen. xix. 12, the only other place in which this occurs.  $\text{שֶׁן}$ , a softened form for  $\text{שֵׁן}$ , as in 2 Sam. xiv. 19. Treasures of wickedness are treasures acquired through wickedness or acts of injustice. The meaning of the question is not, Are the unjust treasures not yet removed out of the house, not yet distributed again? but, as vers. 10b and 11 require, Does the wicked man still bring such treasures into the house? does he still heap up such treasures in his house?

The question is affirmative, and the form of a question is chosen to sharpen the conscience, as the unjust men to whom it is addressed cannot deny it. אִפְּה רָחוֹן, ephah of consumption or hungriness, analogous to the German expression "a hungry purse," is too small an ephah (cf. Deut. xxv. 14; Amos viii. 5); the opposite of אִפְּה (Deut. xxv. 15) or אִפְּה (Lev. xix. 36), which the law prescribed. Hence Micah calls it אִפְּה = אִפְּה in Prov. xxii. 14, that which is smitten by the wrath of God (equivalent to cursed; cf. Num. xxiii. 7, Prov. xxiv. 24). Whoever has not a full ephah is, according to Deut. xxv. 16, an abomination to the Lord. If these questions show the people that they do not answer to the demands made by the Lord in ver. 8, the questions in ver. 11 also teach that, with this state of things, they cannot hold themselves guiltless. The speaker inquires, from the standpoint of his own moral consciousness, whether he can be pure, i.e. guiltless, if he uses deceitful scales and weights,—a question to which every one must answer No. It is difficult, however, to decide who the questioner is. As ver. 9 announces words of God, and in ver. 10 God is speaking, and also in vers. 12, 13, it appears as though Jehovah must be the questioner here. But אִפְּה does not tally with this. Jerome therefore adopts the rendering *numquid justificabo stateram impiam*; but אִפְּה in the *kal* has only the meaning to be pure, and even in the *piel* it is not used in the sense of *niggāh*, to acquit. This latter fact is sufficient to overthrow the proposal to alter the reading into *piel*. Moreover, "the context requires the thought that the rich men fancy they can be pure with deceitful weights, and a refutation of this delusive idea" (Caspari). Consequently the prophet only can raise this question, namely as the representative of the moral consciousness; and we must interpret this transition, which is so sudden and abrupt to our ears, by supplying the thought, "Let every one ask himself," Can I, etc. Instead of אִפְּה we have the more definite *mirmāh* in the parallel clause. Scales and a bag with stones belong together; 'ābhānūm are the stone weights (cf. Lev. xix. 36; Deut. xxv. 13) which were carried in a bag (Prov. xvi. 11). In ver. 12 the condemnation of injustice is widened still further. Whereas in the first clause the rich men of the capital (the suffix pointing back to עִיר in ver. 9), who are also to be thought of in ver. 10, are expressly



mentioned, in the second clause the inhabitants generally are referred to. And whilst the rich are not only charged with injustice or fraud in trade, but with *châmás*, violence of every kind, the inhabitants are charged with lying and deceit of the tongue. *L'shônâm* (their tongue) is not placed at the head absolutely, in the sense of "As for their tongue, deceit is," etc. Such an emphasis as this is precluded by the fact that the preceding clause, "speaking lies," involves the use of the tongue. *L'shônâm* is the simple subject: Their tongue is deceit or falsehood in their mouth; i.e. their tongue is so full of deceit, that it is, so to speak, resolved into it. Both clauses express the thought, that "the inhabitants of Jerusalem are a population of liars and cheats" (Hitzig). The connection in which the verse stands, or the true explanation of *וְשֹׁנָם*, has been a matter of dispute. We must reject both the combination of vers. 12 and 13 ("Because their rich men, etc., therefore I also," etc.), and also the assumption that ver. 12 contains the answer to the question in ver. 10, and that *וְשֹׁנָם* precedes the direct question (Hitzig): the former, because ver. 12 obviously forms the conclusion to the reproof, and must be separated from what precedes it; the latter, because the question in ver. 11 stands between vers. 10 and 12, which is closely connected with ver. 10, and ver. 12 also contains no answer to ver. 10, so far as the thought is concerned, even if the latter actually required an answer. We must rather take *וְשֹׁנָם* as a relative, as Caspari does, and understand the verse as an exclamation, which the Lord utters in anger over the city: "She, whose rich men are full," etc. "Angry persons generally prefer to speak of those who have excited their wrath, instead of addressing their words to them."

The threat of punishment follows in vers. 13-16. Ver. 13. "*So also now do I smite thee incurably, laying waste because of thy sins.*" Ver. 14. "*Thou wilt eat, and not be satisfied; and thine emptiness remains in thee; and thou wilt remove, and not save; and what thou savest I will give to the sword.*" Ver. 15. "*Thou wilt sow, and not reap; thou wilt tread olives, and not anoint thyself with oil; new wine, and not drink wine.*" With *וְיִסְכֶּנְךָ* the threatened punishment is represented as the consequence of, or retribution for, the sins of the people. *הִתְלִיתִי הַכָּה*: literally, I have made the smiting thee sick, i.e. smitten thee

with incurable sickness (for הַחֲלִי, see at Nah. iii. 19 and Jer. xxx. 12; and for the fact itself, Isa. i. 5, 6). The perfect expresses the certainty of the future. The suffix refers to the people, not of the capital only, but, as we may see from ver. 16, of the whole of the kingdom of Judah. *Hashmēm* (an uncontracted form; see Ges. § 67, Anm. 10), *devastando*, is attached to the preceding verb in an adverbial sense, as a practical exemplification, like the שָׁבַע in Lev. xxvi. 18, 24, 28, which Micah had in his eye at the time. For the individualizing of the punishment, which follows, rests upon Lev. xxvi. 25, 26, and Deut. xxviii. 39, 40. The land is threatened with devastation by the foe, from which the people flee into fortresses, the besieging of which occasions starvation. For the fulfilment of this, see Jer. lii. 6 (cf. 2 Kings vi. 25). הֶאֱמַם, ἀπ. λεγ., hollowness, or emptiness of stomach. וְתִסַּב, thou mayest remove, *i.e.* carry off thy goods and family, yet wilt thou not save; but even if thou shouldst save anything, it will fall into the hands of the enemy, and be destroyed by his sword (*vid.* Jer. l. 37). The enemy will also partly consume and partly destroy the corn and field-fruit, as well as the stores of oil and wine (*vid.* Amos v. 11). וְלֹא תִסִּיף שָׁמָּן is taken verbatim from Deut. xxviii. 40.

This trouble the people bring upon themselves by their ungodly conduct. With this thought the divine threatening is rounded off and closed. Ver. 16. "*And they observe the statutes of Omri, and all the doings of the house of Ahab, and so ye walk in their counsels; that I may make thee a horror, and her inhabitants a hissing, and the reproach of my people shall ye bear.*" The verse is attached loosely to what precedes by *Vav*. The first half corresponds to vers. 10–12, the second to vers. 13–15, and each has three clauses. הִשְׁתַּמֵּר, as an intensive form of the *piel*, is the strongest expression for שָׁמַר, and is not to be taken as a passive, as Ewald and others suppose, but in a reflective sense: "It (or one) carefully observes for itself the statutes of Omri instead of the statutes of the Lord" (Lev. xx. 23; Jer. x. 3). All that is related of Omri, is that he was worse than all his predecessors (1 Kings xvi. 25). His statutes are the Baal-worship which his son and successor Ahab raised into the ruling national religion (1 Kings xvi. 31, 32), and the introduction of which is attributed to Omri as the

founder of the dynasty. In the same sense is Athaliah, who was a daughter of Jezebel, called a daughter of Omri in 2 Chron. xxii. 2. All the doing of the house of Ahab: *i.e.* not only its Baal-worship, but also its persecution of the Lord's prophets (1 Kings xviii. 4, xxii. 27), and the rest of its sins, *e.g.* the robbery and murder committed upon Naboth (1 Kings xxi.). With מִלְכֵי the description passes over into a direct address; not into the preterite, however, for the imperfect with *Vav rel.* does not express here what has been the custom in both the past and present, but is simply the logical deduction from what precedes, "that which continually occurs." The suffix attached to מִלְכֵי refers to Ahab and Omri. By לְמַעַן the punishment is represented as intentionally brought about by the sinners themselves, to give prominence to the daring with which men lived on in godlessness and unrighteousness. In הָעָם the whole nation is addressed: in the second clause, the inhabitants of the capital as the principal sinners; and in the third, the nation again in its individual members. שָׁמָּה does not mean devastation here; but in parallelism with שִׁרְקָה, horror, or the object of horror, as in Deut. xxviii. 37, Jer. xxv. 9, li. 37, and 2 Chron. xxix. 8. *Cherpath 'ammî*: the shame which the nation of God, as such, have to bear from the heathen, when they are given up into their power (see Ezek. xxxvi. 20). This shame will have to be borne by the several citizens, the present supporters of the idea of the nation of God.

THE CHURCH'S PENITENTIAL PRAYER, AND THE DIVINE  
PROMISE.—CHAP. VII.

The prophet responds to the threatening of the Lord (ch. vi. 9-16) in the name of the believing church with a penitential prayer, in which it sorrowfully confesses the universality of the deep moral corruption, and painfully bemoans the necessity for the visitation of God (vers. 1-6); after which it rises, through belief in the fidelity of God, to the confidential hope that the Lord will cause the light of His grace to rise again upon the church, which is bearing the merited punishment, and will not let its enemies triumph over it, but will procure it justice, and deeply humble the foe (vers. 7-13); and to this it appends a prayer for the renewal of the former manifestations of grace

(ver. 14). The Lord answers this prayer with the promise that He will renew for His people the wonders of the olden time (vers. 15-17); whereupon the prophet closes by praising the mercy and grace of the Lord (vers. 18-20).

Vers. 1-6. That the prophet is speaking in vers. 1 sqq. not in his own name, but in the name of the church, which confesses and bemoans its rebellion against the Lord, is indisputably evident from vers. 7 sqq., where, as all the expositors admit, the church speaks of itself in the first person, and that not "the existing corrupt Israelitish church," as Caspari supposes, but the penitential, believing church of the future, which discerns in the judgment the chastising hand of its God, and expresses the hope that the Lord will conduct its conflict with its foe, etc. The contents of vers. 1-6, also, do not point to the prophet in distinction from the congregation, but may be understood throughout as the confession of sin on the part of the latter.

Ver. 1. "*Woe to me! for I have become like a gathering of fruit, like a gleaning of the vintage: Not a grape to eat! an early fig, which my soul desired.*" אֶלֶּי, which only occurs again in Job x. 15, differs from הוּא, and is "*vox dolentis, gementis, et ululantis magis quam minantis*" (Marck); and כִּי is not "that," but "for," giving the reason for אֶלֶּי. The meaning of הָיָיתִי כְּאֶסְפִּי is not, "it has happened to me as it generally happens to those who still seek for early figs at the fruit gathering, or for bunches of grapes at the gleaning of the vintage" (Caspari and others); for כְּאֶסְפִּי קִרְיָא does not mean as *at* the fruit-gathering, but *like* the fruit-gathering. The nation or the church resembles the fruit-gathering and gleaning of the vineyard, namely, in this fact, that the fruit-gathering yields no more early figs, and the gleaning of the vintage yields no more grapes to eat; that is to say, its condition resembles that of an orchard in the time of the fruit-gathering, when you may find fruit enough indeed, but not a single early fig, since the early figs ripen as early as June, whereas the fruit-gathering does not take place till August (see at Isa. xxviii. 4). The second simile is a still simpler one, and is very easily explained. אֶסְפִּי is not a participle, but a noun—קִרְיָא the gathering (Isa. xxxii. 10); and the plural is probably used simply because of עוֹלָלָה, the gleaning, and not with any allusion to the fact that the gleaning lasts several days, as Hitzig supposes, but because what is stated applies to all gatherings of

fruit. פֵּר, fruit; see at Amos viii. 1. אֲזַחֵהּ is to be taken in a relative sense, and the force of אִין still extends to בְּפִנְיָהּ (compare Gen. xxx. 33). The figure is explained in vers. 2 sqq.

Ver. 2. *"The godly man has disappeared from the earth, and there is no more a righteous man among men. All lie in wait for blood, they hunt every man his brother with the net. Ver. 3. Their hands are after evil, to make it good. The prince asks, and the judge is for reward; and the great man, he speaks the evil of his soul: and they twist it together."* The grape and the early fig signify the good and the righteous man. הַפִּיִּיר is not the God-fearing man, but, according to the context, the man who cherishes love and fidelity. אָבַר, not "to have perished," but to be lost, to have disappeared. מִן הָאָרֶץ, not "out of the land," but, as the parallel בְּאֶרֶץ shows, from the earth, out of the world. For the fact itself, compare Ps. xii. 2 and Isa. lvii. 1. They all lie in wait for blood, i.e. not that they all go about committing murder, but simply that they set their minds upon quarrels, cheating, and treachery, that they may rob their neighbour of his means of existence, so that he must perish (cf. ch. iii. 2, 3, ii. 1, 2); at the same time, even murderous thoughts are not excluded. The same thing is implied in the hunting with the net. אָח, the brother, is the fellow-countryman (for this figure, compare Ps. x. 9, xxxv. 7, 8, etc.). In ver. 3 the words from הָרַע לְהִיטִיב to עַל הָרַע are not to be joined to what follows so as to form one sentence. Such a combination is not only opposed to the accents, but is at variance with the structure of the whole verse, which consists of several short clauses, and it does not even yield a natural thought; consequently Ewald proposes to alter the text (שׂוֹאֵל). הָרַע is hardly the *inf. hiph.* "to do evil," but most likely a noun with the article, "the evil;" and the thought is therefore either "both hands are (*sc.* busy) with evil," or "both hands are stretched out to evil," to make it good, i.e. to carry out the evil well (לְהִיטִיב as in Jer. ii. 33), or to give evil such a form that it shall appear to be good, or right. This thought is then made special: the prince, the judge, and the great man, i.e. the rich man and mighty man (Lev. xix. 15; 1 Sam. xxv. 2), weave a thing to make evil good. עָבַת, to weave, to twist together, after עֲבוֹת, twist or string. The subject to וַיַּעֲבֹתָהּ is to be found in the three classes already named, and not merely in the judge and the great man. There is just as

little reason for this limitation as for the assumption that the great man and the prince are one person. The way in which the three twist the thing or the evil plan together is indicated in the statements of the three previous clauses. The prince asks, *sc.* for the condemnation of a righteous or innocent man; and the judge grants this for recompense against compensation; and the rich man co-operates by speaking *havvath naphshō*. *Havvāh* in most passages is universally allowed to signify hurt, mischief, destruction; and the only question is, whether this meaning is to be traced to הוּוּ = אוּוּ, to breathe (Hupfeld on Ps. v. 10), or to הוּוּ, to occur, an occurrence, then specially an evil occurrence (Hengstenberg, *Diss. on the Pentateuch*, vol. i. p. 252). Only in Prov. x. 3 and the passage before us is *havvāh* said to signify desire in a bad sense, or evil lust. But, as Caspari has shown, the meaning is neither necessary nor established in either of these two passages. In Prov. x. 3 the meaning *ærumna activa aliisque inferenda* is quite sufficient; and C. B. Michaelis has adopted it for the present passage: "The great man speaks the mischief of his soul," *i.e.* the injury or destruction of another, for which he cherishes a desire. *Nephesh*, the soul as the seat of desire. הוּוּ is not introduced to strengthen the suffix attached to נַפְשִׁי, "of his, yea of his soul" (Ewald, Hitzig, Umbreit); for not only are the accents against this, but also the thought, which requires no such strengthening. It is an emphatic repetition of the subject *haggādōl*. The great man weaves evil with the king and judge, by desiring it, and expressing the desire in the most open manner, and thereby giving to the thing an appearance of right.

And even the best men form no exception to the rule. Ver. 4. "*Their best man is like a briar; the upright man more than a hedge: the day of thy spies, thy visitation cometh, then will their confusion follow.*" Ver. 5. "*Trust not in the neighbour, rely not upon the intimate one; keep the doors of thy mouth before her that is thy bosom friend.*" Ver. 6. "*For the son despiseth the father, the daughter rises up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the people of his own house.*" בְּטוֹבָם, the good man among them, *i.e.* the best man, resembles the thorn-bush, which only pricks, hurts, and injures. In אֲשֶׁר the force of the suffix still continues: the most righteous man among them; and מִן before מְמַסְכֶּרָה is

used in a comparative sense: "is more, *i.e.* worse, than a thorn-hedge." The corruption of the nation has reached such a terrible height, that the judgment must burst in upon them. This thought comes before the prophet's mind, so that he interrupts the description of the corrupt condition of things by pointing to the day of judgment. The "day of thy watchmen," *i.e.* of thy prophets (Jer. vi. 17; Ezek. iii. 17, xxxiii. 7), is explained in the apposition *p'qūddāth'khā* (thy visitation). The perfect *יָבִיחַ* is prophetic of the future, which is as certain as if it were already there. *וְכָל*, now, *i.e.* when this day has come (really therefore = "then"), will their confusion be, *i.e.* then will the wildest confusion come upon them, as the evil, which now envelopes itself in the appearance of good, will then burst forth without shame and without restraint, and everything will be turned upside down. In the same sense as this Isaiah also calls the day of divine judgment a day of confusion (Isa. xxii. 5). In the allusion to the day of judgment the speaker addresses the people, whereas in the description of the corruption he speaks of them. This distinction thus made between the person speaking and the people is not at variance with the assumption that the prophet speaks in the name of the congregation, any more than the words "*thy* watchmen, *thy* visitation," furnish an objection to the assumption that the prophet was one of the watchmen himself. This distinction simply proves that the penitential community is not identical with the mass of the people, but to be distinguished from them. In ver. 5 the description of the moral corruption is continued, and that in the form of a warning not to trust one another any more, neither the companion (*עֹלָם*) with whom one has intercourse in life, nor the confidential friend (*'allūph*), nor the most intimate friend of all, viz. the wife lying on the husband's bosom. Even before her the husband was to beware of letting the secrets of his heart cross his lips, because she would betray them. The reason for this is assigned in ver. 6, in the fact that even the holiest relations of the moral order of the world, the deepest ties of blood-relationship, are trodden under foot, and all the bonds of reverence, love, and chastity are loosened. The son treats his father as a fool (*nibbēl*, as in Deut. xxxii. 15). "The men of his house" (the subject of the last clause) are servants dwelling in the house, not relations

(cf. Gen. xvii. 23, 27, xxxix. 14; 2 Sam. xii. 17, 18). This verse is applied by Christ to the period of the *κρίσις* which will attend His coming, in His instruction to the apostles in Matt. x. 35, 36 (cf. Luke xii. 53). It follows from this, that we have not to regard vers. 5 and 6 as a simple continuation of the description in vers. 2–4a, but that these verses contain the explanation of עָמָה תְּהִיָּה מִבְּרִיכָתָם, in this sense, that at the outbreak of the judgment and of the visitation the faithlessness will reach the height of treachery to the nearest friends, yea, even of the dissolution of every family tie (cf. Matt. xxiv. 10, 12).

Vers. 7–13. "This confession of sin is followed by a confession of faith on the part of the humiliated people of God" (Schlier.). Ver. 7. "*But I, for Jehovah will I look out; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me.*" Ver. 8. "*Rejoice not over me, O mine enemy! for am I fallen, I rise again; for do I sit in darkness, Jehovah is light to me.*" By וְאֵנִי what follows is attached adversatively to the preceding words. Even though all love and faithfulness should have vanished from among men, and the day of visitation should have come, the church of the faithful would not be driven from her confidence in the Lord, but would look to Him and His help, and console itself with the assurance that its God would hear it, i.e. rescue it from destruction. As the looking out (*tsâphâh*) for the Lord, whether He would not come, i.e. interpose to judge and aid, involves in itself a prayer for help, though it is not exhausted by it, but also embraces patient waiting, or the manifestation of faith in the life; so the hearing of God is a practical hearing, in other words, a coming to help and to save. The God of my salvation, i.e. from whom all my salvation comes (cf. Ps. xxvii. 9; Isa. xvii. 10). Her enemy, i.e. the heathen power of the world, represented in Micah's time by Asshur, and personified in thought as daughter Asshur, is not to rejoice over Zion. 'ע, for, not "if:" the verb *nâphaltî* is rather to be taken conditionally, "for have I fallen;" *nâphal* being used, as in Amos v. 2, to denote the destruction of the power and of the kingdom. The church is here supposed to be praying out of the midst of the period when the judgment has fallen upon it for its sins, and the power of the world is triumphing over it. The prophet could let her speak thus,



because he had already predicted the destruction of the kingdom and the carrying away of the people into exile as a judgment that was inevitable (ch. iii. 12, vi. 16). Sitting in darkness, *i.e.* being in distress and poverty (cf. Isa. ix 1, xlii. 7; Ps. cvii. 10). In this darkness the Lord is light to the faithful, *i.e.* He is their salvation, as He who does indeed chasten His own people, but who even in wrath does not violate His grace, or break the promises which He has given to His people.

Ver. 9. "*The wrath of Jehovah shall I bear, for I have sinned against Him, till He shall fight my fight, and secure my right. He will bring me forth to the light; I shall behold His righteousness.*" Ver. 10. "*And may my enemy see it, and shame cover her, who hath said to me, Where is Jehovah thy God? Mine eyes will see it; now will she be for a treading down, like mire of the streets.*" Confidence in the help of the Lord flows from the consciousness, that the wretchedness and sufferings are a merited punishment for the sins. This consciousness and feeling generate patience and hope: patience to bear the wrath of God manifesting itself in the sufferings; hope that the sufferings, as inflicted by the righteous God, will cease as soon as the divine justice has been satisfied. *Za'aph*: *lit.* the foaming up of wrath (Isa. xxx. 30); hence strong wrath. This the church will bear, till the Lord conducts its conflict and secures its rights. רִיבִי is the judicial conflict between Israel and the heathen power of the world. Although, for example, God had given up His nation to the power of its enemies, the nations of the world, on account of its sins, so that they accomplished the will of God, by destroying the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, and carrying away the people into exile; yet they grew proud of their own might in so doing, and did not recognise themselves as instruments of punishment in the hand of the Lord, but attributed their victories to the power of their own arm, and even aimed at the destruction of Israel, with scornful defiance of the living God (cf. Isa. x. 5-15; Hab. i. 11). Thus they violated the rights of Israel, so that the Lord was obliged to conduct the contest of His people with the heathen, and secure the rights of Israel by the overthrow of the heathen power of the world. For רִיבִי רִיב, see Ps. xliii. 1; עָשָׂה כְּשָׁפָם, Ps. ix. 4, 5; and for the fact itself, Isa. xlix. 25,

li. 22. *Mishpāt* is Israel's right, in opposition to the powers of the world, who would destroy it. The following word יִצְיִיִּי is not governed by עַר אֲשֶׁר, as the absence of the copula *Vav* shows. With these words the hope takes the form of the certain assurance that the Lord will remove the distress, and let Israel see His righteousness. *Ts'dāqāh* is the righteousness of God revealing itself in the forgiveness and restoration of Israel to favour; like *ts'dāqōth* in ch. vi. 5: in actual fact, the salvation of Israel about to be secured, regarded as an emanation of the righteousness of the covenant God; hence parallel to אִוֵּר רָאָה with לֵךְ, to look at, so that one penetrates, as it were, into an object, seeing with feasting of the eyes (so also in ver. 10). This exaltation of Israel to new salvation it is hoped that the enemy will see (וַתֵּרָא, opt.), and be covered with shame; for the power of the world is overthrown, in order that Israel may be redeemed out of its power. This desire is a just one, because the enemy has despised the Lord God. For the expression, "Where is Jehovah thy God?" compare Joel ii. 17. And Israel will see its fulfilment (וַתֵּרָאֵנָה with *Nun* doubled after a sharpened *é*; see Ewald, § 198, a). *Attāh*, now (seeing the future in spirit, as having already come), the enemy will be trodden down like mire of the streets (for this figure, see Isa. x. 6).

The confident expectation rises in vers. 11 sqq. into an assurance of the promise; the words of the prophet in the name of the church rising into an address to Zion, to confirm its hope by the promise of the restoration of Zion, and the entrance of crowds of people into the city of God. Ver. 11. "A day to build thy walls (cometh); in that day will the ordinance be far away. Ver. 12. In that day will they come to thee from Asshur and the cities of Egypt, and from Egypt to the river, and (to) sea from sea, and (from) mountain to mountain. Ver. 13. And the earth will become a desert because of its inhabitants, for the fruit of their doings." Ver. 11 consists of two clauses; for we may easily supply to *yōm* "is" or "will be" = come. The daughter Zion is addressed (cf. ch. iv. 8) not as a church, but as a city, as the centre and representative of the kingdom of God. As such, she is compared to a vineyard, as in Isa. v. 1-7, xxvii. 2-4, Ps. lxxx. 9, 10. The word *gādēr*, which is generally used for the hedge or wall around a vineyard, points to this (see Isa. v. 5; Num. xxii. 24; Eccles.

- x. 8). **וּלְיוֹם הַהוּא** is an adverbial accusative; in that day will **ph** be far away. The meaning of this word is very difficult to find, and can hardly be settled with any certainty. The explanation of *chōq*, as signifying the law imposed upon Israel by the heathen oppressors (Chald., Hengstenberg, etc.), cannot be sustained, as this meaning cannot be established from Ps. civ. 20, and is not suggested by the context. So, again, the explanation, "On that day will the goal set (for Israel), or the boundary fixed (for it), be a far distant one (*i.e.* then will the boundaries of the land of Israel lie in the far distance, or be advanced to the remotest distance:)" Hitzig, Caspari, and others), introduces a meaning into the words which they do not possess. Even if *chōq* does denote a fixed point or a limit of either space or time, it never signifies the boundary of a nation; and *rāchaq*, to be far off, is not equivalent to being advanced to a great distance. *Chōq* is apparently used here for the ordinance or limit which God has appointed to separate Israel from the nations; not a land-boundary, but the law of Israel's separation from the nations. This law will be far away, *i.e.* will be removed or set aside (*yirchaq* is only chosen for the sake of the assonance with *chōq*), inasmuch as numerous crowds, as is added in ver. 12 by way of explanation, will then stream to Zion, or come to the people of God, out of all lands (cf. ch. iv. 1, 2). For this is what ver. 12 refers to, and not the return to Zion of the Israelites who have been scattered in the heathen lands. **וְיָבִיאוּ** (impersonal), one comes, they come: not "return," **וְיָשׁוּבוּ**, which must have been the expression used if the return of the Israelites out of their captivity had been meant. The heathen who cherish a desire for the God of Zion and His law (ch. iv. 2) will come to Israel; not to Israel as still living in their midst (Caspari), but to the Israel that has already returned, and whose walls have been rebuilt (ver. 11). The building of the walls of Zion involves the gathering together of the dispersed nation, or rather presupposes it. Heathen will come "from Asshur and the cities of Egypt," *i.e.* from the two mightiest empires in the time of the prophet. *Mātsōr*, the poetical name of Egypt, as in Isa. xix. 6, xxxvii. 25; and "cities of Egypt," because that land or kingdom was especially rich in cities. The further definitions individualize the idea of the totality of the lands and provinces, the correlative members

being transposed and incomplete in the last two sentences, so that the preposition עַל must be supplied to הָיָה, and the preposition מִן to הָהָרִים. From Egypt to the river (Euphrates) includes the lands lying between these two terminal points; and in the expressions, "sea from sea, and mountain to mountain," seas and mountains are mentioned in the most general manner, as the boundaries of lands and nations; so that we have not to think of any particular seas and mountains, say the Western (or Mediterranean) Sea, and the Eastern (the Dead or the Galilean) Sea, as being the western and eastern boundaries of Palestine, and of Lebanon and Sinai as the northern and southern boundaries, but must adhere firmly to the general character of the expression: "from one sea and one mountain to another sea and mountain," *i.e.* from every land situated between seas and mountains, that is to say, from all the lands and provinces of the earth. The coming out of all lands is not to be understood as denoting simply passing visits to Canaan or Zion, but as coming to connect themselves with the people of God, to be received into fellowship with them. There is a parallel to this promise in the promise contained in Isa. xix. 18-25, that in the Messianic times Egypt and Asshur will turn to Jehovah. This takes place because the earth will become a desert, on account of the evil deeds of its inhabitants. Whilst Zion is rebuilt, and the people of God are multiplied, by the addition of the godly Gentiles out of all the countries of the earth, the judgment falls upon the sinful world. This statement of ver. 13 is simply attached to what precedes it by וְהָיָה, in order to complete the promise of the restoration of Zion, by adding the fate which will befall the earth (*i.e.* the earth outside Canaan); but it actually contains the motive for the coming of the crowds to Zion. הָאָרֶץ cannot be the land of Israel (Canaan) here, in support of which appeal has been made to Lev. xxvi. 33 and Isa. i. 7; for the context neither leads to any such limitation as that הָאָרֶץ could be taken in the sense of אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן (in Leviticus and Isaiah), nor allows of our thinking of the devastation of Canaan. When the day shall have come for the building of the walls of Zion, the land of Israel will not become a desert then; but, on the contrary, the devastation will cease. If the devastation of Canaan were intended here, we should have either to take וְהָיָה as a pluperfect, in violation of the rules

of the language, or arbitrarily to interpolate "previously," as Hitzig proposes. *עַל יְשֻׁבָּהּ* is defined more precisely by *מִפְּרִי מַעֲלֵיהֶם*. The doings are of course evil ones, and the deeds themselves are the fruit (cf. Isa. iii. 10).

Vers. 14–17. The promise of salvation impels the congregation to pray that it may be granted (ver. 14); whereupon the Lord assures it that His covenant mercies shall be renewed, and promises the thorough humiliation of the hostile nations of the world (vers. 15–17). Ver. 14. *"Feed thy people with thy staff, the sheep of thine inheritance, dwelling apart, in the wood, in the midst of Carmel: let them feed in Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of the olden time."* The question in dispute among commentators, whether this prayer is addressed to the Lord by the prophet on behalf of the nation, or whether the prophet is still speaking in the name of the believing church, is decided in favour of the latter by the answer addressed to the church in ver. 15. The Lord is addressed as the shepherd of Israel, the title by which Jacob addressed Him in Gen. xlix. 24 (cf. Ps. lxxx. 2, xxiii. 1 sqq.). The prayer is related to the promise in ch. v. 3 sqq., viz. that the ruler coming forth out of Bethlehem will feed in the strength of Jehovah, and involves the prayer for the sending of this ruler. *"With this staff,"* i.e. the shepherd's staff (cf. Lev. xxvii. 32; Ps. xxiii. 4), is added pictorially; and as a support to the prayer, it designates the people as the sheep of Jehovah's inheritance. *צֹאן נַחֲלָה*, instead of *עֹם נַחֲלָה*, which occurs more frequently, is occasioned by the figure of the shepherd. As the sheep need the protection of the shepherd, lest they should perish, so Israel needs the guidance of its God, that it may not be destroyed by its foes. The following apposition *שֶׁכֶּנִּי לְבָרֶךְ* determines the manner of the feeding more precisely; so that we may resolve it into the clause, *"so that thy people may dwell apart."* The words contain an allusion to Num. xxiii. 9, where Balaam describes Israel as a people separated from the rest of the nations; and to Deut. xxxiii. 28, where Moses congratulates it, because it dwells in safety and alone (*bádád*, separate), under the protection of its God, in a land full of corn, new wine, etc. The church asks for the fulfilment of this blessing from Jehovah its shepherd, that it may dwell separate from the nations of the world, so that they may

not be able to do it any harm; and that "in the wood in the midst of Carmel," that promontory abounding in wood and pasture land (*lætis pascuis abundat*: Jerome on Amos i. 2). The wood is thought of here as shutting off the flock from the world without, withdrawing it from its sight, and affording it security; and the fact that dangerous wild beasts have their home in the forest (Jer. v. 6; Ps. lxxx. 14) is overlooked here, because Israel is protected from them by its own shepherd. יָרֵעַ, which follows, is not future, but optative, corresponding to the imperative יִרְעָה. Gilead and Bashan are also named as portions of the land that were rich in pasture (cf. Num. xxxii. 1 sqq.), namely, of the land to the east of the Jordan, Carmel belonging to the western portion of Canaan. These three portions individualize the whole of the territory which Israel received for its inheritance, and not merely the territory of the kingdom of the ten tribes. The simple reason why no districts in the kingdom of Judah are mentioned, is that Judah possessed no woody districts abounding in grass and pasture resembling those named. Moreover, the prayer refers to the whole of Israel, or rather to the remnant of the whole nation that has been rescued from the judgment, and which will form an undivided flock under the Messiah (cf. ch. v. 2; Isa. xi. 13; Ezek. xxxvii. 15 sqq.). יָמֵי עוֹלָם, "the days of old," are the times of Moses and Joshua, when the Lord brought Israel with His mighty arm into the possession of the promised land.

The Lord answers this prayer, by promising, according to His abundant goodness, more than the church has asked. Ver. 15. "*As in the days of thy going out of the land of Egypt will I cause it to see wonders.*" Ver. 16. *Nations will see it, and be ashamed of all their strength: they will lay the hand upon the mouth, their ears will become deaf.* Ver. 17. *They will lick dust like the snake, like the reptiles of the earth they come trembling out of their castles: they will go trembling to Jehovah our God, and before thee will they fear.*" The wonders (*niphlâ'ôth*; cf. Ex. iii. 20, xv. 11; Ps. lxxviii. 11) with which the Lord formerly smote Egypt, to redeem His people out of the bondage of that kingdom of the world, will the Lord renew for His people. In יִצְחָק the nation is addressed, whilst the suffix of the third pers. attached to יִצְחָקִי points back to עַמִּי in ver. 14. The miraculous deeds will make such an impression, that the heathen

nations who see them will stand ashamed, dumb and deaf with alarm and horror. Ashamed of all their strength, *i.e.* because all their strength becomes impotence before the mighty acts of the Almighty God. Laying the hand upon the mouth is a gesture expressive of reverential silence from astonishment and admiration (cf. Judg. xviii. 19; Job xxi. 5, etc.). Their ears shall become deaf "from the thunder of His mighty acts, Job xxvi. 14, the *qōl hāmōn* of Isa. xxxiii. 8" (Hitzig). With this description of the impression made by the wonderful works of God, the words of God pass imperceptibly into words of the prophet, who carries out the divine answer still further in an explanatory form, as we may see from ver. 17*b*. The heathen will submit themselves to Jehovah in the humblest fear. This is stated in ver. 17. Licking the dust like the serpent contains an allusion to Gen. iii. 14 (cf. Ps. lxxii. 9 and Isa. xlix. 23). *אֲרָצֵי אֲרָץ*, earth-creepers, *i.e.* snakes, recalls the *אֲרָצֵי עֶפֶר* of Deut. xxxii. 24. Like snakes, when they are driven out of their hiding-place, or when charmers make them come out of their holes, so will the nations come trembling out of their castles (*misg'roth* as in Ps. xviii. 46), and tremble to Jehovah, *i.e.* flee to Him with trembling, as alone able to grant help (see Hos. iii. 5), and fear before thee. With *מִפְּנֵי* the prayer passes into an address to Jehovah, to attach to this the praise of God with which he closes his book.

Ver. 18. "*Who is a God like Thee? removing guilt and passing over iniquity to the remnant of His inheritance. He retaineth not His anger for ever, for He delighteth in mercy.*" Ver. 19. "*He will have compassion upon us again, tread down our transgressions; and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.*" Ver. 20. "*Mayest Thou show truth to Jacob, mercy to Abraham, which Thou hast sworn to our fathers from the days of old.*" *אֵל בְּצִמְחָה* looks back to Ex. xv. 11; but whether Micah also plays upon his own name is doubtful. Like the first redemption of Israel out of Egypt, the second or still more glorious redemption of the people of God furnishes an occasion for praising the incomparable nature of the Lord. But whereas in the former Jehovah merely revealed Himself in His incomparable exaltation above all gods, in the restoration of the nation which had been cast out among the heathen because of its sins, and its exaltation among the nations, He now reveals

His incomparable nature in grace and compassion. The words 'נִצָּח עֵן וְיָ' are formed after Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7, where the Lord, after the falling away of Israel from Him by the worship of the golden calf, reveals Himself to Moses as a gracious and merciful God, who forgives guilt and sin. But this grace and compassion are only fully revealed in the restoration and blessing of the remnant of His nation by Jesus Christ. (For ver. 18b, see Ps. ciii. 9.) As One who delighteth in mercy, He will have compassion upon Israel again (*yāshūbh* used adverbially, as in Hos. xiv. 8, etc.), will tread down its sins, *i.e.* conquer their power and tyranny by His compassion, and cast them into the depths of the sea, as He once conquered the tyrant Pharaoh and drowned him in the depths of the sea (Ex. xv. 5, 10). This believing assurance then closes with the prayer (*titten* is optative) that the Lord will give His rescued nation truth and mercy (*'ēmeth* and *chesed*, after Ezek. xxxiv. 6), *i.e.* give them to enjoy, or bestow upon them, what He had sworn to the patriarchs (Gen. xxii. 16). Abraham and Jacob are mentioned instead of their family (cf. Isa. xli. 8).

With this lofty praise of the Lord, Micah closes not only the last words, but his whole book. The New Testament parallel, as Hengstenberg has correctly observed, is Rom. xi. 33-36; and the *μυστήριον* made known by the apostle in Rom. xi. 25 sqq. gives us a view of the object and end of the ways of the Lord with His people.

END OF VOL. I.

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